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SIX Cents

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

JACK'S FORTUNE; OR, THE STRANGEST LEGACY IN THE WORLD.

AND OTHER STORIES

BY THE SELF-MADE MAN



As Jack, after great exertion, landed the heavy brass-bound box on the surface, the two crooks, who had been furtively watching him at work, sprang forward, the one in advance enveloping the boy in the folds of a tablecloth.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 28, 1917.

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JACK'S FORTUNE

—OR—

THE STRANGEST LEGACY IN THE WORLD

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

JACK'S STRANGE LEGACY.

"It's a fierce night," said Jack Gardiner, gazing through a cracked pane of one of the windows of a ramshackle story-and-a-half cottage that stood on the outskirts of the town of Wallingford, upon the rain-soaked and wind-swept landscape outside, lit up at frequent intervals by the lurid lightning that preceded each terrible crash of heaven's artillery. "Fierce without and fierce within," he added, "for I'm afraid the old man won't live till morning. When he's gone there will be nothing for me to do but pull up stakes and strike out again for myself. I would have done that long ago, for I'm sick of hanging about this place, only I couldn't leave him in the lurch. He's been kind to me, a homeless boy, in his way, and the best I could do for him in return was to stand by him in his misfortune. Well, his troubles are about over, while I suppose the worst of mine are yet before me. I've heard people say this is a beautiful world, but I haven't found anything but hardship, and misery, and tough luck in it. Maybe things will turn out different with me some day, but I don't know. The prospect looks bitter and dreary enough now, just like the night, which is about as bad as a night well can be. Why should he have to die on such a night as this? Why should be get the short end of luck right up to the edge of the grave? I say it's tough."

Jack looked resentfully at the elemental commotion without as though nature was inflicting a personal injury on him.

It was certainly a night to make cheerful people a little blue, and grouchy persons downright sulky.

The wind howled and screeched as it tore around the cottage.

It shook the door and rattled the windows as though insisting on gaining admittance into that miserable dwelling.

Sometimes its fury died away for a brief interval, and then the boy could hear it whispering to itself among the eaves.

What was it saying?

Did it know that an old man, a mere wreck of humanity, was dying inside?

If it did why didn't it breathe a gentle requiem instead of howling around like a fiend and making all the noise it could?

Was it trying to frighten the friendless and lonesome boy inside who was peering out into the storm?

If that was its object it was wasting its fury to no purpose, for Jack Gardiner was too plucky a lad to be easily scared, though his customary good spirits were sadly dampened by the combination of unpropitious circumstances he was now facing.

At that moment a weak voice called to him from the inner room.

It was the voice of the man whose span of life was contracting with each tick of the cheap wooden clock on a shelf near the door.

Jack hastened into the dimly lighted bedroom where on a cot lay the wasted form of Andrew Marven.

"A drink, Jack," he said feebly.

The doctor had left a bracer in the shape of a cordial, to be administered whenever the patient was thirsty, and the boy gave him some of this, which revived him.

"Jack, my lad, I can't last much longer. I am going—going out with the tide."

Jack knew it and he said nothing.

"Where am I going, Jack? I feel like a battered old hulk, adrift without rudder or compass on a trackless waste of water, bound for the port of missing ships. When I have closed my eyes forever on this world, which has been a sad and bitter one to me, shall I open them on a brighter world where I have heard there is no sorrow or pain? Is there such a place, Jack? If there is I shall soon know. If death is merely the beginning of an eternal sleep, well, what's the odds? I shall be at rest, and rest is what I want. Now, Jack, I have something to say to you. I am going to make you my heir—the heir of a fortune. I see you look at me strangely. You think my wits are wandering—that the hand of Death is making me childish. You are saying to yourself, 'How can Andrew Marven make me heir to a fortune when for two years past he and I have been living from hand to mouth? If he possessed a fortune would we not have been living in luxury?' Listen, my lad, and I will explain. This fortune I spoke of exists as surely as we both at this moment draw the breath of life, but I have never been able to penetrate the secret that surrounds it. I have the clue to it, but it has baffled me. You are young. You are bright. Perhaps in time you may be able to find the key to this treasure. I will leave you the one clue just as it came into my hands. Study it well, for somewhere about it lies the secret of the fortune. If you can unravel the mystery your ingenuity will be well repaid."

Andrew Marven put his hands to his neck and raised into view a piece of strong, thin cord to which was attached a coin the size of a dollar, only half again as thick.

It was an old English copper penny bearing on one side the profile of George III, with the words "Georgius III" in a circle, while at the bottom was the date 1781.

The reverse side had been rubbed down smooth, and upon this surface certain figures and letters had been imprinted by a sharp tool.

With some effort Andrew Marven removed the cord from his neck and held the coin out to the boy.

"There is your legacy, my lad. The figures and letters on the back are the clue to the treasure. I have tried for years to unravel the mystery of their meaning, but my most persistent efforts proved an utter failure. Perhaps you may

have better luck. I only know one man who could read the secret if the coin fell into his hands. He is a Mexican named Sanchez Guerrero, and if he is still alive a greater scoundrel does not walk the earth unhung. Beware of him, for it is too much to expect that such a villain as he is gone to meet his master, the arch-fiend. For fifteen years, ever since the day this coin came into my possession, he has been on my track, intent upon wresting it from me, that he might obtain the clue to the treasure, and he has made life a burden to me. All my ingenuity to throw him off my track proved unavailing up to the moment I struck this town. Here I determined to make my last stand and fight it out with him, for I was weary of this game of hide and seek. Strange to say, though I took no special pains to cover my tracks in coming here, he has failed to appear during the two years I have lived here. That is why I fancy he may be dead. I cannot imagine any other reason that would keep him away. But as I have no knowledge that he has gone to his reckoning it is well that I warn you against him. He is as crafty and subtle as a serpent, and as relentless as fate. Put that cord around your neck so that the coin may always be on your person. It is a strange legacy I am leaving you, Jack—perhaps the strangest in the world; but it may prove to be your fortune."

Jack Gardiner mechanically obeyed the dying man's directions, though he had no great faith that anything would ever come out of his mysterious heritage.

As Andrew Marven fell back on his pillow, exhausted by the efforts he had made, the boy gave him another drink of the cordial.

He lay quite still with closed eyes, breathing heavily.

Gradually his breath came easier, and it seemed to Jack that he had yielded to a fitful sleep.

During all this time the storm had been raging furiously about the neighborhood, but neither Jack nor the dying man seemed to pay any attention to its presence.

Now as the boy sat looking down at the man who had been his companion for nearly two years he became conscious of the elemental strife once more.

The uproar was not as violent as it was at the time he was looking from the window.

The storm seemed to be passing away to the northwest.

It was a lonesome vigil Jack Gardiner was keeping beside the only friend he had in the world, and it need not be wondered at if his thoughts were of the gloomiest character.

There was little in his young life so far to give him any satisfaction.

A retrospect of the few years he had lived showed a discouraging record of misfortune.

His father was serving a life sentence in the State prison for murder—the circumstantial nature of the evidence, and what was considered an ingenious defense, having saved him from the gallows.

After his father's conviction things went from bad to worse with his mother and himself.

Every cent of their savings had gone to the legal firm which had defended the husband and father, and they fell from a position of comparative prosperity to one of absolute indigence.

The stigma of the crime fell like a pall over their heads, for the world turned its back upon them.

It made no difference that they had no part in the deed, they had to suffer for their connection with the man convicted of it.

Of the many friends they once had not one came forward to offer sympathy or give them a helping hand.

In a word, they were ostracised from society and the double blow was more than Jack's mother could bear up under.

She gradually faded away until one day, a wreck of her former self, she died, and the boy was left to fight his own way against an unfavorable fate.

He became a tramp, working here and there whenever he could find anything to do, and a precarious living he made at the best.

It need scarcely be wondered at if he took a pessimistic view of the world.

No man takes kindly to the hand that smites him, and so Jack had no love for a world that handled him without gloves.

Two years since, on a Christmas morning, when the church bells of Wallingford were ringing out good will to all mankind, Jack reached the outskirts of the town weary and dis-

A few inches of snow lay on the ground and the air was keenly cold.

He had not eaten anything to speak of for twenty-four hours, and he did not know where to turn for shelter or a crust.

He seemed to have reached the end of his endurance, and with a hopeless moan he sank down on the doorstep of the ramshackle dwelling in which we now find him.

There Andrew Marven, returning from a neighboring store with packages of food for his Christmas dinner, found him.

The man took him in, revived and fed him, and made him welcome, and from that day to this Jack Gardiner had been an inmate of the cottage, and the employment he secured in Wallingford enabled the strange pair who found mutual sympathy in each other's society, to live in a fairly comfortable way.

Perhaps Jack was thinking of all this as he sat by the bedside of his dying companion, the one man who seemed to understand him and had treated him like a human being, and was figuring what his future would be when Andrew Marven was laid away in his grave.

Perhaps he was also thinking about the strange legacy, with its promise of a fortune, which his friend had bequeathed to him, and wondering if it would ever amount to anything.

Whatever was the character of his thoughts they were suddenly broken in upon by a sharp rap at the door.

"Who can that be at this hour of the night, and on such a night as this is?" he asked himself. "We have never had any visitors before, why should we on this night of all others?"

While he mused, making no attempt to get up and ascertain who the caller might be, the knock was repeated, more insistent than before.

"Whoever it is seems to mean business," thought Jack. "I will see what he wants."

So he went to the door, took down the bar and threw it open.

Two men, muffled up to their eyes, stood outside.

There was a sinister glint in the eyes of the man in advance which sent a chill through the boy's blood.

There was something ominous in his attitude and bearing that Jack did not like.

"What do you want?" he asked in a tone that coincided with his feelings.

The sinister pair of eyes swept Jack from head to foot.

"I shall want Andrew Marven," said a voice in a foreign accent. "He lives here, is it not so?"

"Yes, he lives here; but—"

The stranger did not wait for him to finish his speech, but pushed his way unbidden into the cottage, followed by his companion, whose appearance was tough and unsavory.

"Hold on," cried Jack angrily, grasping him by the arm. "What right have you to force yourself in here?"

"Caramba!" hissed the stranger who had asked for Andrew Marven. "You talk to me of right? I go where I please. Where he is? Ah, this room."

Sweeping Jack rudely aside the stranger entered the bedroom.

The boy followed him, the other man remaining in the living-room.

The dying man, aroused by the disturbance, looked at his visitor.

"Aha!" cried the stranger. "At last I have found you, Andrew Marven—at last. Now we will see if you will give to me what I want."

"Sanchez Guerrero!" gasped the dying man wildly.

"Si, senor. It is two years now that you give to me the slip. Now—"

"You are too late. The coin is—"

"Too late! What you mean? I am not in the humor to fool," hissed the Mexican savagely. "Give me the coin or I will tear it from you."

From under his cloak Guerrero drew a glittering knife and with the other hand he grasped Andrew Marven by the throat.

This was too much for Jack Gardiner.

"You scoundrel!" he cried, leaping on the Mexican. "How dare you?"

CHAPTER II.

JACK ELUDES THE MEXICAN AND HIS PAL.

"Caramba!" hissed Guerrero, turning fiercely on Jack. "I will have your life!"

As he raised his knife to carry out his threat, Andrew

Marven, summoning his last remaining strength, sprang up in bed and seized the Mexican by the wrist.

"You shall not hurt the boy, villain! You shall not—" Blood gushed from his mouth and choked his utterance.

He gasped for air and then his head fell back and his body collapsed, dragging the Mexican down with him, for not for a moment did the dying man relax his grasp on the rascal's wrist.

Guerrero struggled to free himself, but it was a dead man who now held him with a grip of steel.

Jack, whose eye was on the knife, leaned forward and forced the weapon from his grasp.

It fell with a ringing sound between the cot and the wall.

With a terrible imprecation in Spanish, Guerrero wrenched his wrist free and then he saw that Marven was dead.

Jack also saw that his only friend was a corpse.

"You have killed him, villain!" he cried. "Why didn't you let him die in peace?"

"I killed him!" ejaculated the Mexican. "It is a lie!"

"You did. He was dying anyway. He could not have lasted much longer. You jumped upon him and robbed him of the little breath he had left. You are a murderer!"

"Bah! Be quiet, or I send you after him," hissed the Mexican. "So he was dying. I did not know that. However, it makes no difference so long as I find what I came here for. He has led me a fine dance these fifteen years. Well, this is the end, and the fortune will now be mine."

He reached for the corpse.

"Leave him alone! You shall not touch him!" cried Jack furiously, grasping Guerrero by the arm.

"Caramba! You young whelp!"

The Mexican struck the boy a blow in the face that sent him staggering toward the door.

"Cutcliffe!" he shouted.

His companion appeared in the doorway.

"Take this boy and keep him quiet."

The man addressed as Cutcliffe seized Jack and dragged him into the living-room, while the Mexican slammed the door shut.

"Now, yer bloomin' hump," said Cutcliffe in a pronounced cockney accent, "sit down and behave yerself or I'll give yer a taste of me mawleys."

He pushed the boy into a chair and looked threateningly down on him.

Jack saw that resistance against this husky fellow would be a waste of energy on his part, so he sat still, watching the rascal in aggressive silence.

What was the Mexican doing in the room with the corpse?

He easily guessed that he was searching the body for the coin that contained the clue to the treasure.

"Well, he won't find it," thought the boy with a thrill of satisfaction.

Then the fearsome thought struck him that Guerrero, disappointed in his search, might extend it to himself, on the suspicion that Andrew Marven, finding himself at death's door, had transferred it to his keeping.

Cutcliffe, finding that the boy made no resistance, but sat quiet enough in the chair, drew away from him.

He took a pipe from his pocket, charged it with tobacco, and removing the chimney from the lamp lighted it at the flame.

Then he walked over toward the door of the room and listened.

Faint sounds came through the panels, as if the Mexican was busy ransacking the place.

Jack heard them and it made his blood boil at the indignity offered the dead man; but he realized that he could do nothing to prevent what was going on.

At length Guerrero opened the door and came out.

His eyes sparkled with suppressed fury and disappointment.

"Have you found the bloomin' coin?" asked his companion.

The Mexican uttered an angry negative.

"Bov," he said, facing Jack and fixing him with his sinister eyes, "how long you have lived with Senor Marven?"

"Two years," replied Jack in sulky defiance.

"Two year, eh? In this house?"

"Yes, in this house."

"The senor has perhaps told you something about a copper coin which he had. Is it not so?"

"What business is that of yours?"

"Aha! You admit you know. Perhaps you will tell where he hid it?"

"How should I know where he hid it?"

"Caramba! You will not tell, eh? I know a trick that will make you open your mouth. Cutcliffe, you will find something to tie him, then we will see if the bird will sing or not."

"You won't tie me," replied Jack, jumping to his feet.

The Mexican showed his glittering white teeth in an unpleasant smile.

"The young senor will see," he replied malevolently, taking from his pocket a small piece of rice paper and then some tobacco with which he coolly proceeded to manufacture a cigarette.

This he lighted at the top of the lamp chimney while his associate was hunting for a piece of rope to tie Jack.

Guerrero watched the boy like a cat does a mouse it expects to soon pounce upon.

It did not occur to him that the lad had the least chance to escape him.

Jack's eyes roved toward the door leading into the outer air, but the Mexican stood in a position that would enable him to easily cut him off if he made a break in that direction.

The boy felt that he was in a mighty tight fix.

To shout for help would be useless at that hour and in that lonesome spot.

Jack, however, was a plucky boy, and he felt a strong resentment against Guerrero for hastening Andrew Marven's death.

He was fully determined that the villain should gain nothing through him if he could in any way prevent him doing so.

So far the Mexican showed no suspicion that he thought the copper coin had passed into the boy's keeping.

He merely suspected that the lad had some idea of his hiding place, and he intended to torture the boy into a confession of what he knew about it.

Cutcliffe finally found a piece of clothes-line that would answer his purpose.

Holding it in his hand he approached Jack.

The boy, by a quick movement, placed the table between himself and the cockney.

"Powder me blue! Does the bloomin' young hidgit think as 'ow he can give me the slip?"

The Mexican smiled grimly and seemed not the least bit disturbed by Jack's change of base.

"The young senor cannot escape from this room until he has given me a clue to the copper coin," he said.

"You won't get any information from me," replied Jack doggedly.

"You will sing a different tune presently," said Guerrero darkly.

"Will I?" answered Jack defiantly. "See if you can make me."

"We waste time," said the Mexican impatiently. "Capture him, Cutcliffe."

The Englishman made a dash to circle the table as Guerrero placed himself in a position to prevent the boy making a successful retreat.

Then Jack did something that upset all their calculations.

Quick as a flash he snatched up the lamp and flung it with all his might in Cutcliffe's face.

It struck him on the upper part of the chest, the hot chimney falling against his face and bringing a roar of pain from his lips.

The lamp fell with a crash to the floor, rolled over several times and went out, leaving the room in darkness.

"Caramba!" roared the Mexican. "Do not let him escape!"

Jack slid under the table, rose with it supported by his head and two hands, and flung it in the direction of Guerrero's voice.

There was a crash, a volley of imprecations from the Mexican, and the sound of a fall.

Taking advantage of his chance Jack dashed for the door, flung it open, and rushed out into the night.

Then taking to his heels he ran toward the nearest house five hundred yards away.

CHAPTER III.

JACK'S NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

When Jack reached the house in question he pounded lustily on the front door.

It was about two in the morning and the people had long since retired to rest.

The noise he made, however, was sufficient to raise a dead man almost, and it aroused the inmates in short order.

Their first impression was that the house was on fire, and that the firemen were at the door.

While the women folks were making a cautious investigation the owner of the house opened his bedroom window and called out:

"What's the matter? Who's there?"

"I am Jack Gardiner, who lives in the house over yonder. Let me in and I'll tell you what is the matter."

"Can't you tell me where you are? What has happened that you come over here raising such a terrible hubbub at my door, frightening the women into the idea that the house is on fire?"

"Andrew Marven, the man with whom I have been living, is dead," said Jack.

"Is he? Well, what is that to us? I'm not an undertaker."

"There are two rascals in the house, one of whom attacked both Marven and myself, and hastened his death. I barely made my escape from them. I want you to help me."

"I'm not a fool to butt in where I'm not wanted," replied the householder in a grouchy tone. "What you want to do is to go to the police. I think you have a lot of nerve to wake us up at this hour of the morning. Go on now, and make yourself scarce."

With those words the man slammed the window down, thereby intimating that Jack could expect no assistance from him.

Thus repulsed in a most unfriendly way, poor Jack felt that in his hour of trouble he was always getting it hot and heavy from every quarter.

He looked back through the darkness toward the cottage he had left, expecting to see the Mexican and his companion waiting somewhere in the gloom for him to step into the road again and give them the chance to pounce upon him.

Not a sound came from the sloppy road, which lay quiet and solemn under the dull sky that threatened a renewal of the late rain.

If the two rascals had followed him, and were lying in wait to nab him, he could not tell.

In any case he would have to take his chance of meeting them.

With ears and eyes on the alert he left the inhospitable dwelling and continued on into the town.

The only thing he could do was to proceed to the police-station, quite a distance away, and report the facts to the officer in charge.

He knew the way to the building, which was in the heart of the business section, and thither he made his way as quickly as he could go.

Two green gas lamps stood on either side of the entrance, so there was no danger of his missing the building in the night.

Reaching the station he made known his errand to the officer nodding at the desk.

After he had been questioned as though he were a criminal himself, two policemen were sent back to the cottage with him.

The door was found open, the interior wrapped in gloom, and the place found tenanted only by the corpse.

Guerrero and his cockney companion had decamped and left no clue to the direction they had taken.

The officers remained the rest of the night at the cottage with the boy, and in the morning the coroner was notified of Andrew Marven's death.

The body was removed to an undertaking establishment to be buried, the undertaker agreeing to give the old man a decent burial for what he could get from the sale of Andrew Marven's furniture and effects, and the few dollars that Jack had saved up.

On the following afternoon Marven was buried in a neglected corner of the cemetery, and Jack attended his obsequies as chief and only mourner.

A plain wooden board with his name and date of death was his sole headstone, and after that was placed at the head of the filled-in mound the boy returned to town to find himself homeless and practically penniless once more.

Sadly, wearily and without aim or purpose he wandered about the streets of Wallingford until darkness fell again and the gnawings of a healthy appetite called his attention to the fact that he was very hungry.

So he entered a cheap restaurant and ate a frugal supper. He then applied at the police station for a night's lodging.

When he awoke next morning the sun was shining brightly.

He was questioned by one of the policemen who had taken a fancy to his intelligent looking face, and the result was the officer collected a couple of dollars among his associates and presented the money to the boy.

This kindly act went a long way toward arousing Jack's spirits, which had got down to a pretty low ebb, and he ate a good breakfast at the first restaurant he came to.

While eating he decided to leave Wallingford at once and try for work on some farm in the country.

The fact that he had never worked on a farm in his life did not deter him from his purpose.

He had heard that farm work was hard and poorly paid, as labor goes, but he did not care for that as long as he could secure a roof over his head and enough to eat.

Leaving the restaurant he walked straight down the main street of the town till he reached the country road, and then with a brave heart he started out once more to make his own way in the world.

How far he would have to tramp before he came to a farm where he could apply for work he had not the slightest idea, but he knew that the road before him led to the rural district, and that was enough for him.

He toiled on down the road, catching glimpses of a river on the left from time to time, and looking over a wide panorama of fields and woods and hills on the right, with more distant and blue-looking hills bounding the prospect, till the position of the sun overhead told him that it was about noon-time.

Climbing a fence to rest his tired limbs he spied a farmhouse about a quarter of a mile away across a broad field.

After resting a quarter of an hour he started for the house.

When he presented himself at the door of a wide, cheerful-looking kitchen, he found the family, consisting of the farmer, his wife, two grown-up girls and the three big boys, seated around a table at dinner.

When he asked for work the farmer said he had none to give him, as he had ample help in his own sons.

"Where are you from—Wallingford?"

"Yes, sir," replied Jack.

"Walked all the way from there, I suppose?"

"I have."

"Hungry, I dare say?"

The boy admitted that he was.

"Well, you shall have your dinner here, at any rate," replied the hospitable agriculturist, and room was immediately made at the table for Jack.

When he had eaten all he could he offered to do some work to pay for his meal, but this offer was declined.

The farmer told him that he did not think he would get any work this side of the next town, an unimportant place called Blackton, about fifteen miles away.

Beyond that point there was a wide farming district where it was quite likely he might be able to secure steady employment at some place.

So Jack resumed his tramp in good spirits.

It was late in the afternoon, about six o'clock, when he caught sight of a church steeple in the distance which he readily conjectured indicated the presence of Blackton, which, though called a town, was not much larger than a good-sized village.

The road crossed the railroad tracks, and at that point he saw a small station.

Several teams were drawn up at the back of the platform, and there were other signs to show him that a train was about due.

As he approached the station he heard the whistle of the train, which presently came in sight at decreasing speed and finally came to a stop alongside the platform.

Among the persons who alighted was a young man of nineteen or twenty, whose personal appearance might have been summed up as shabby genteel.

He sported a watch-chain, however, had the knowing air of a city chap, and carried a black traveling-bag.

Declining to patronize the hotel 'bus he started to walk to town, about half a mile away down a gentle slope.

He came up to Jack as the 'bus dashed by, and he looked at the travel-stained boy with some interest.

The whole of Jack's personal property, which consisted of one clean shirt, a single change of linen, and a few other odds and ends, was contained in a carpet-bag which he carried over his shoulder attached to a stout stick.

Anybody with half an eye could see that Jack was not traveling either for his health or for amusement.

The tired look on his face and the dust on his well-worn garments showed that he had been on the road for many hours, if not all day.

The strange young man regarded him with a scrutinizing glance and then addressed him.

"Bound for Blackton, I suppose?" he said in a friendly tone.

"Yes," replied Jack, pleased at the idea of being spoken to, for he yearned for any kind of companionship.

"You look as if you'd hoofed it for some distance," said the young man.

"I've walked from Wallingford."

"That's quite a way. Why didn't you take the railroad?"

"Couldn't afford it."

"Have you friends in Blackton?"

"No. I haven't a friend in the world," replied Jack a bit sadly.

The young man looked at him in a peculiar way.

"All alone, eh? Folks dead and thrown on your own resources? What's your name?"

"Jack Gardiner."

"Mine is Dick Swivel. Expect to find work in Blackton?"

"No. I'm looking for a place on a farm."

"Then you're a farmhand?"

"I never worked on a farm in my life."

"No? Why do you want to go farming?" asked the young man in some surprise. "I should think you'd rather stay in a town or city."

"I thought I might like farming. I'm tired of towns."

They were now walking up the shady main street of Blackton.

"Where are you going to stop?" asked the young man.

"I don't know, but I suppose I'll find some place."

"S'pose you stay at the hotel with me to-night?"

"I'd like to, but I can't afford it," replied Jack.

"Oh, it won't cost you anything. I'll pay the damage," replied the young man cheerfully.

"You're very kind, but I have no right to expect you to spend your money on me."

"Don't you worry about that. Money was made to be spent."

Jack thought his companion didn't look as if he was overburdened with cash in spite of the watch-chain he sported.

"Here's the hotel now," said Dick Swivel, as they stopped in front of the Blackton House, a modest looking establishment of two stories and a half, with additions to one side and an ell in the rear. "Come on in," he added, grasping Jack by the arm and pulling him up on the front veranda, and thence into a large room on the ground floor.

It was fitted up as a reading-room and office, with a billiard table and a pool ditto in the background.

Dick Swivel registered for them both, and they were shown to a small, square room in one of the additions.

Here they washed up and the young man loaned Jack a whisk broom to brush the dust from his clothes.

While they were attending to their toilets the bell rang for supper.

"Are you hungry, Gardiner?" asked Swivel with a grin.

"I am, though I had a pretty good dinner about noon at a farmhouse along the road."

"Well, come on. We'll go down and see what kind of provender this hotel provides its patrons with."

Accordingly they found their way to the dining-room, and were shown to two seats by a girl waitress, who proceeded to set a plain but substantial meal before them.

CHAPTER IV.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF DICK SWIVEL.

The meal proved a sumptuous one in Jack's eyes, though in point of fact it was nothing to go into raptures over.

After supper they adjourned to the veranda, and Swivel, producing a corn cob pipe, indulged in a smoke.

"Do you smoke cigarettes?" asked the young man. "If you do I'll give you a nickel to buy a package."

"No. I don't smoke anything," replied Jack, wondering at the uncommon generosity of his new acquaintance.

"You don't drink either, I suppose?"

"No. Nothing in the intoxicating line."

They talked together for an hour or so, Dick Swivel proving himself quite an entertaining companion, and then they retired to their room and turned in for the night.

Jack slept like a top till about two o'clock, when he was awakened by the booming of a bell.

The night being quite still, the sound was wafted through the open window in the room with clear and distinct resonance.

Jack sat up in bed and listened.

He wondered what the sound meant.

Maybe there was a conflagration in town, and that was the fire bell.

Boom—boom—boom!

Then he became aware that his companion was not in bed, nor was he in the room.

"Where can he be?" Jack asked himself.

He got up and looked around.

"He must have got up, dressed himself and walked downstairs to find out the cause of the disturbance. Why, where is his bag?"

The black traveling-bag, which his companion had brought to the room, and which had reposed beside Jack's seedy carpet-bag when they went to bed, was missing.

"That's funny," thought Jack. "Why should he carry his bag away in the middle of the night if he merely went out to find out what the bell was ringing for?"

Boom—boom—boom! continued the deep-toned bell.

While the absence of his companion was rather a surprise to him, the disappearance of the black bag was a puzzle that he could not make head or tail of.

Jack got up, pulled on his shoes and stockings and trousers, and started to walk out into the corridor, when to his further surprise he found the door locked.

He struck a match and looked at the keyhole, expecting to find the key on the outside, but it wasn't.

There was no key in the keyhole.

Jack scratched his head in some bewilderment.

"Why did Swivel lock me in the room in the first place, and why carry off the key in the second?" the boy asked himself.

Of course these were questions he couldn't answer.

He went to the window and looked out, but couldn't see any signs in the air of a conflagration.

There was no reflection on any of the surrounding buildings, nor a red glare in the sky; nor did he hear the jingle of the fire-engines.

He could hear a few people running on the street, but no great excitement such as he naturally would associate with a fire.

The bell continued to send forth its sonorous alarm for some minutes, and then it ceased, and its vibrations died away into almost profound silence.

"I'd like to know what's up," thought Jack, who was as curious as the majority of boys. "There is certainly something wrong in town or that bell wouldn't have boomed out in that fashion. Since the door is locked I wonder if I can't get out by this window? It's only a slight drop to the ell below, and from there I could easily reach the ground. I could return the same way, for I see there's a short ladder in the yard. I'll do it. I will probably meet Swivel at the scene of excitement."

So Jack put on his jacket, let himself down on to the roof of the ell, and jumped to the ground.

He was soon hurrying along Main street in the direction whence the sound of the bell had come.

He saw a crowd in front of a building, which he presently found out was the Blackton Bank.

"What's the excitement?" Jack asked a man on the fringe of the mob.

"Bank has been robbed, I understand," was the reply.

"The bank robbed!" ejaculated Jack. "Was that why the bell was rung?"

"Of course. The bell was placed on the roof of the bank to be used as an alarm in case the watchman could not use the telephone for some reason. You are a stranger in town, I guess."

"Yes; I came here about dark, and am stopping at the Blackton House," replied Jack.

Jack soon learned that there was no doubt that the bank had been entered by three persons, the watchman bound and gagged, and the safe looted of a considerable amount.

When the watchman, after the departure of the rascals,

succeeded in releasing himself, he found the telephone disconnected, and then he rang the alarm bell which brought several policemen and a crowd of townsmen on the scene in short order.

Questioned by the police for a description of the burglars, the watchman said that they had come upon him so suddenly, with faces covered with masks, that he wasn't able to get a good look at them.

He declared, however, that one had a foreign accent, and that one of them appeared to be quite a young fellow.

That was the extent of his knowledge.

Jack looked around for his new acquaintance, but saw no signs of him.

After hanging around the bank until the crowd began to break up, Jack returned to the hotel, climbed up on the ell roof with the help of the ladder, and pulled himself into his room through the window.

He half expected to find Dick Swivel back ahead of him, but he wasn't, and so he removed his clothes, went back to bed, and in a short time was asleep again.

The room was bright with sunshine when Jack awoke about eight o'clock.

Dick Swivel and the black bag were still absent, and Jack wondered why.

He tried the door and found it was locked as before, and he asked himself as he dressed if he would be obliged to leave the room again by the window.

After brushing his hair neatly he looked out of the window, thinking it advisable to call somebody's attention to the fact that his door was locked and the key gone, rather than make himself conspicuous by descending to the ground by way of the roof of the ell.

As his eye took in the roof below he saw a brass key lying there, glistening in the sunlight.

It didn't seem likely that that could be the missing key, but with the idea that it might fit his door he got out of the window, picked it up and returned to the room.

Trying it in the lock he found that it fitted exactly, the door opened and he walked out into the corridor.

He went down to the office and turned it in at the desk.

The proprietor of the house was behind the counter reading a paper.

"Have you seen the young man who came with me last evening?" Jack asked him.

"Not this morning," was the answer. "Maybe he's in the dining-room getting his breakfast."

Jack had his doubts about finding his companion there, but as he was hungry he went to the dining-room, took his seat at a table and waited for one of the waitresses to come over.

When she did Jack propounded the same question to her.

She answered that the young man in question had not been to breakfast yet.

He did not allow the fact to interfere with his appetite, which was uncommonly good, and he made a hearty meal of beefsteak, hot rolls, fried potatoes and coffee.

Then he returned to the office, eager to continue his journey, but not wishing to do so till he wished his companion good-by and thanked him for his hospitality.

Nine o'clock came and still there was no sign of Dick Swivel.

Jack then went around asking everybody connected with the house that he met if they had seen his acquaintance, but they had not.

Finally he went to the desk again where the proprietor was talking with several people about the robbery at the bank.

Jack asked for his carpet-bag, which he had left at the desk when he turned in his key.

The proprietor looked at his book, saw that a night's lodging with supper and breakfast had been paid for in advance by his two guests, and handed him the carpet-bag.

"Can I leave a note for the young man who came with me last evening?"

"Sure," said the proprietor.

So Jack sat at a writing-table, wrote a short note, enclosed it in an envelope, and after addressing it to Dick Swivel, handed it to the proprietor of the hotel.

Then he left the house and started down the shady street in the direction he was bound, still wondering where his late acquaintance had gone to with his black bag.

CHAPTER V.

JACK OUTWITS THE BANK ROBBERS.

Before quitting the town altogether Jack walked into a baker shop and bought a package of crackers, and next door he got half a pound of cheese.

He wanted to provide himself with a meal in case he did not reach a farmhouse by the time he got hungry.

His forethought stood him in good stead, for along about noon, with not a house in sight, the sky clouded up and he was obliged to take refuge in an old shed from the rain which came on with unexpected suddenness.

The shed was an old abandoned, dilapidated affair, fitted with two horse stalls, and had a loft above, originally for the storage of hay, access to which was gained by a flight of steps at the back.

Jack was sitting on the steps munching his cheese and crackers and watching the light rain outside when he saw three men approaching the shed from the direction of the road.

There was something familiar about the three that attracted his attention.

One of them carried a black bag, while the others had bundles under their arms.

Jack stopped eating and watched them attentively.

"That chap with the bag seems the dead picture of Dick Swivel," he said to himself. "Can it be he? If so, what is he doing out here, and who are the men he is with?"

As the trio drew nearer Jack became satisfied that the young chap with the bag was Dick Swivel beyond a doubt.

But his consternation was great indeed when he recognized the other two as Sanchez Guerrero, the Mexican, and his associate Cutcliffe.

Jack knew there would be something doing if they discovered him in the shed toward which they were bound, so he did the only thing he could do—retreated to the loft, hoping they would not come up there themselves.

In a few minutes they entered the rickety building, and hardly were they under cover before the rain began to come down in right good earnest.

"Hace mal tiempo," said the Mexican, meaning that the weather was bad, as he shook the raindrops from his soft cowboy hat.

"What are you saying? Why don't you speak United States?" asked Swivel.

"I say the weather it is bad," replied Guerrero, proceeding to roll a cigarette and light it.

"Why didn't you say it in English in the first place, then I'd known what you were talkin' about?" said Swivel, taking a cigar from his vest pocket and lighting it.

Cutcliffe, whose other name was Bill, pulled out a pipe and was soon adding his share of tobacco smoke to the atmosphere of the shed.

"We pulled that bloomin' bank job hoff in great shape," said Cutcliffe in a tone of great satisfaction. "We 'ave a good chawnce now to count the swag and divide it up."

"That's right," nodded Swivel. "Just keep your optics on the field outside so that nobody can pop in on us unawares, and the Mexican and me'll divide the plunder."

Jack, up in the loft, easily heard every word uttered below, and he was staggered to learn that his late acquaintance, whom he had thought such a nice young chap, was a professional crook, in league with Guerrero and Cutcliffe, who appeared to be pretty well up in the same business themselves.

So these three were the burglars who had broken into the Blackton Bank.

Dick Swivel had evidently come down by rail to join the other two, the crime having been planned ahead.

"No wonder," thought Jack, "that I found him missing from the room when the alarm bell woke me up. He put up at the hotel as a kind of blind. I s'pose he took a kind of fancy to me when he overtook me near the station, and finding me hard up treated me to a night's lodging and a couple of square meals. He's all right in his way, but I can't say that I like his way much. I suppose he's got the plunder from the bank in his black bag, and they're going to divide it among them."

Jack's supposition was correct.

JACK'S FORTUNE.

Dick Swivel had the plunder in his bag, and was going to make an equal division of it into three parts.

He opened the bag and began taking out package after package of money, laying the same on the floor.

"Hist!" came a warning from the cockney crook.

"What's up?" asked Swivel, pausing in his work.

"Put up the money. There's a man comin' this way as farst as he can run."

"Caramba!" cried Guerrero angrily.

Dick Swivel tumbled the packages back into his bag, snapped it to and running up the steps shoved it into the dark loft close to where Jack was crouching.

Then he slipped back again and the three waited, in a sulky humor, for the newcomer, who was drenched to the skin, to enter the shed, which he did in a few minutes.

He proved to be a farmhand belonging to the farm on which the shed stood, and seemed to be in no way surprised to find the shed already tenanted.

Swivel alone seemed disposed to say anything to the intruder, the others holding aloof and smoking in silence.

The black bag stood so close to Jack in the loft that he could easily put his hand on it without moving.

It gave him a strange sensation to feel that the money stolen from the bank was within his reach.

What a great thing it would be if he could recover that money for the bank!

The very idea of such a thing sent the blood bounding through his veins.

Was it possible for him to accomplish such a thing?

It hardly seemed so.

And yet he might be able to at least make the attempt.

There was an opening at the back of the loft through which he might be able to squeeze and drop to the ground.

Then he could take to his heels through the rain.

It mattered nothing if he got a soaking in a good cause—he would probably be well paid for bringing the money back.

The thought of a reward in connection with the thing stimulated him.

If he received \$100 it would be a small fortune to him.

While he figured upon the matter the rain thundered upon the roof of the shed and almost drowned the desultory talk he heard below.

He decided that instead of making off with the black bag and his own as well, it would be better for him to transfer the money to his carpet-bag, as one bag would be easier for him to carry than two.

With that idea in his head he opened the black bag and began transferring the packages of money to his own bag.

He counted in all twelve bundles of money, which he had no doubt would foot up a big sum.

When the last bundle had been shoved into his own bag it suddenly occurred to him that it would be a good joke to fill the vacant space in the black bag with a bundle of refuse that lay close by in the loft.

The idea appealed to the humorous side of Jack's nature, and he no sooner thought of it than he carried it out.

"What a shock they'll get when they find that the money has mysteriously disappeared and a bundle of old rot taken its place. They'll say things that will make the air blue in their neighborhood, I'll bet a hat. Well, the next thing is for me to get out through that hole without attracting attention. If I can do that I guess I'll be able to get off all right."

With great caution Jack moved inch by inch over toward the rear opening in the loft, carrying his bag with him.

The rattle made by the rain on the roof greatly aided him, and he reached the hole at last without any misadventure.

Jack looked out on the teeming landscape, and it was with no great feeling of pleasure that he contemplated the drenching that was before him.

Before he could cross one of those long, shelterless fields in the rear of the shed there would be a strong likeness between him and a drowned rat.

The satisfaction he would have in outwitting the bank robbers, and restoring the stolen money would more than make up for all the inconvenience he would have to face.

So, pushing his legs and body out backward, and dragging his carpet-bag after him, Jack dropped to the ground as lightly as a monkey might.

With the bag over his shoulder he started off across the field in the drenching downpour, which soon soaked through his threadbare apparel to his skin.

CHAPTER VI.

JACK RETURNS THE MONEY TO THE BANK AND IS REWARDED.

At the end of the field Jack got over a fence into the next one.

By this time the rain had eased up a good bit.

He kept on toward a small wood he saw a short way ahead.

As he was about to make his way in among the trees he saw a prosperous looking farmhouse about a quarter of a mile away.

He lost no time in reaching it and was soon knocking on the kitchen door.

His wretched condition aroused the sympathy and hospitality of the woman of the house, who opened the door.

"Come in, come in," she said. "My goodness! Why, you're wet to the skin."

"Yes, ma'am, I'm pretty wet," replied Jack in as cheerful a tone as he could muster. "If I'd been in the river I couldn't be much wetter."

"John!" called the woman to her husband.

When John appeared she said:

"Take this boy upstairs and give him some dry clothes to put on. Why, he's a perfect wreck. Been out in all that heavy rain. Bring his wet garments down here and I will wring them out and hang them up to dry around the fire."

John guided Jack upstairs to a small back room and told him to strip.

While the boy was doing this the farmer was picking out some dry duds for him to put on for the time being.

Fifteen minutes later Jack felt quite comfortable once more, and was explaining to the farmer and his wife that he was caught in the rain while walking along the road en route for some farm where he could get work.

"Then you're a farmhand, are you?" said John.

John had to admit that he was not, but was willing to be.

"I'd give you an opening on my farm, only I have all the help I can handle just now," said the man. "There are several farms between this and Willowdale, which is a matter of sixteen miles from here. You ought to be able to find work on one of them."

It rained off and on during the afternoon, but finally the clouds rolled away and there was promise of fair weather again.

Supper was nearly ready before Jack's clothes were fit for him to put on again.

By the time the meal was over it was growing dark and Jack asked the farmer if he might sleep in the barn that night, as he didn't like to tramp at night.

He received permission to do so, and he turned in early, being careful to keep the carpet-bag with him.

"Those chaps must have discovered the absence of the money long before this," he said as he made a bed for himself in a great pile of hay. "They must have been paralyzed when Dick Swivel opened his black bag and found a bundle of old musty paper in place of the money."

Jack laughed softly to himself as he pictured their consternation, and their inability to fathom the mystery of the disappearance of the money.

"There's a lot of money in those twelve packages," he continued. "I ought to get at least \$100 for returning it. That will set me on my feet a bit. I can get a new suit of clothes and some other things that I need. I hope those rascals will never find out that I had a hand in doing them out of their plunder. That Mexican has it in for me enough already about the copper coin. If he thought I had possession of it I have no doubt he'd be as hot on my trail as he ever was on Andrew Marven's. I wonder if I'll ever be able to read the meaning of those figures and letters on the smooth surface of that old coin? They must be a puzzle if the old man couldn't get at the bottom of them in fifteen years. How then can I expect to do better than he? Well, as soon as I get settled down in a job I'm going to study the problem from every point of the compass, and it is possible I may hit the mark in the course of time."

Jack fell asleep while he was thinking about his strange legacy, the copper coin.

It was broad daylight when he awoke, and he heard the farmer moving about the lower floor of the barn.

Immediately after breakfast he thanked the farmer and his wife for their kind hospitality, and started back for Blackton to restore the stolen money to the bank.

He had gone but half a mile when a wagon bound for that town overtook him, and he was thus enabled to get a ride over the rest of the road.

Owing to the robbery of all its available cash, the Blackton Bank had been compelled to temporarily close its doors, so when Jack reached the building he found the entrance shut.

A number of townspeople were standing there reading the typewritten notice posted up, which stated that the institution was in the hands of the State bank examiners.

As nobody was admitted into the building, Jack found himself barred out with the rest.

Finally an automobile came up to the curb and the boy heard somebody say that the gentleman in the vehicle was the president of the bank.

Jack rushed over to the machine just as the president started to alight.

"Are you the president of the bank?" Jack asked.

"Yes, my boy. What do you want?"

"I have brought back the money that was stolen the night before last."

The president looked at him as if he thought the boy was a species of lunatic at large.

"You've brought the stolen money back!" ejaculated the gentleman. "What do you mean?"

"I mean I've brought it back. I recovered it from the thieves who stole it."

The president looked at the boy's excited face and noted his earnest manner.

"If you brought it back," replied the gentleman incredulously, "where is it?"

"In this carpet-bag."

The president seized the bag, lifted it into the auto and opened it.

It seemed almost too absurd for him to expect that the boy's story was true.

Yet the moment he exposed the interior of the bag he saw that it was jammed full of packages of bills, done up in regulation bank style.

He could no longer doubt the truth of the boy's remarkable statement.

Snapping the catch to again, he took the bag in one hand and caught Jack by the arm with the other.

"Come inside and tell me how you managed to recover this money. You've done what three detectives have not managed to accomplish."

He led the way to the door of the bank, pressed an electric bell and they were presently admitted by the janitor.

The president took Jack directly to his office.

The cashier followed them inside to consult with his superior.

"Shut the door, Mr. Cook," said the president, "and take a seat. A most extraordinary thing has happened. This boy has, by his own statement, recovered the money taken by the burglars the night before last."

The cashier looked his amazement.

"He has?" he ejaculated. "Where is it? In that carpet-bag?"

"It appears to be," replied the president. "First of all, open it, Mr. Cook, take out the packages you will find in it, count the amounts and see if they tally with the sum taken."

The cashier followed instructions and there was a silence in the little room until Mr. Cook announced that the whole of the money stolen was there.

"Now, my lad, we'll hear your story. It must be a singular one. First of all I want to know your name and where you live."

"My name is Jack Gardiner, and I don't live anywhere."

"You don't live anywhere?" exclaimed the president.

"No, sir. I haven't any home. The man I lived with for the past two years in Wallingford died a few days ago and that threw me on my own resources."

"Then your parents are dead?"

"My mother is."

"And your father?"

"I'd rather not speak about him."

"Well, tell us your story about how you came to recover from the thieves the money stolen from the bank. As there seems to have been three men implicated in the crime, it appears a most extraordinary circumstance that you, a boy, were able to get their plunder away from them."

"It was accident more than anything else that enable me to turn the trick."

"Well, go ahead. We are waiting impatiently to hear your story."

Jack began his narrative by describing how he had made the acquaintance of the young man named Dick Swivel near the Blackton station.

How they had walked as far as the Blackton House together, and how he had accepted the young man's invitation to stay with him at the hotel all night.

Then he stated how, after they had both gone to bed, he had been awakened by the alarm bell on the room of the bank building, and was surprised to find that his companion was not in bed or even in the room.

He had evidently got up, dressed and disappeared, taking his black traveling-bag with him.

Jack told how he had got up and dressed, too, with the intention of going out to learn the cause of the alarm.

"I was astonished to find the door locked and the key gone," he said, "so I had to get out by the window and the roof of the one-story ell underneath it. I expected to find Dick Swivel at the scene of the disturbance, but he wasn't there. After I learned the bank had been robbed I returned to the hotel and climbed into the room by the same way I had left it."

Jack then went on to tell how after waiting some time next morning for Swivel to show up he had left a note for him at the hotel, and then started on his journey again.

"Where were you bound?" asked the president.

"I wanted to find work on some farm, and expected to take up with the first offer I got, for all the money I have in the world amounts to only a little over two dollars."

"Go on."

Jack told how he had walked along the county road until about noon, when he had to take shelter from the rain in an old dilapidated shed.

Then he described the arrival there of the three crooks with the black bag containing their bank plunder.

"They intended to take advantage of the chance to divide the money, and started to do so when they were interrupted by the appearance of a young farmhand," said Jack.

He then went on to tell how Dick Swivel had shoved the black bag containing the money into the loft where he had taken refuge in order to put it out of the newcomer's sight, he supposed.

"When I found that the money I knew had been stolen from this bank was within my reach I immediately began to figure on taking possession of it and returning it to the bank. I believed that was my duty, though at first I couldn't see how I could put the job through."

Jack then explained how he had finally managed the trick, and got away from the shed in the pouring rain without attracting the attention of the three rascals.

"Well, upon my word, young man, I cannot compliment you too much on the part you have played in this affair. You are certainly entitled to full credit for restoring the stolen money, and you shall be suitably rewarded as soon as I call a meeting of the directors and they have heard your story. In the meantime, while you remain in Blackton, you shall be the guest of the bank. I will make arrangements for your stay at the Blackton House at our expense. I will send you there with a clerk, and you may expect to be summoned here some time this afternoon to meet the directors, to whom I shall want you to repeat your story."

Accordingly the president of the bank sent Jack to the Blackton House in time for him to sit down to a good dinner, and he was duly registered as a guest of the bank.

At three o'clock the clerk called to escort him back to the bank.

The directors and the bank examiner, who had just arrived, were assembled in the board room.

The president introduced Jack to them and he was then invited to repeat his story, detailing how he had recovered the bank's funds from the thieves.

His narrative did not vary in any essential particular from the story he had previously told the president, and was repeated in a modest and straightforward way that carried conviction to the minds of all who listened to him.

When he had finished one of the directors offered a resolution tendering the boy the thanks of the bank and a reward of \$1,000.

The resolution was carried unanimously and the cashier was instructed to pay the money over to Jack.

With the \$1,000 in his pocket he was sent back to the hotel, and he went like one in a dream, elated beyond measure at his great good fortune.

CHAPTER VII.

JACK MEETS WITH A SURPRISE.

On reaching the hotel again Jack went directly to the room assigned to him, took out the ten one-hundred-dollar bills, and spreading them on the bed looked at them as if they were the most wonderful curiosities in the world.

Indeed, they were truly wonderful curiosities to him, for never in all his life before had he seen and handled a hundred-dollar bill, much less ten of them.

And these bills were his own—every bit his property!

There were the bills, crisp and brand-new, and they rustled under his touch.

"They are mine—actually mine!" he breathed. "Ten one-hundred-dollar bills—\$1,000 altogether. What am I going to do with so much money?"

For the first time in his life he began to realize that the possession of a considerable sum of money carried with it a sense of responsibility and anxiety.

"I can't carry this money around with me. I'd stand a good chance of losing it. Or I might be robbed, and that would be a terrible thing. I can't realize that I am worth a small fortune. Why, what couldn't I buy with \$1,000?"

It was a rich treat for him to finger those bills as he counted them over and over again.

"I'll have to break one of them, for I need a decent suit of clothes, for one thing."

He picked up one of the bills and looked at it regretfully.

He hated to spend any part of it, not from any miserly feeling, but because the bill looked too good to be parted with.

That, however, was a secondary consideration.

The principal thing was how was he to dispose of all this money so that it would be perfectly safe?

He decided to consult with the president of the bank.

By the time he had reduced his satisfaction and enthusiasm within reasonable bounds the bell rang for supper, and stowing his money away in his pocket, he went downstairs to the dining-room.

That night Jack hid the money under the mattress of his bed, but his anxiety about it caused his sleep to be disturbed by bad dreams, in all of which Guerrero, the English crook, and Dick Swivel figured with unpleasant prominence.

He woke up several times in a fright, and was not relieved until he had ascertained that the bills were safe where he had put them.

He was up and downstairs next morning nearly an hour before breakfast was ready, and after the meal he walked about town until he thought it was time for the president to be at the bank.

The one daily paper issued in Blackton had a full account that morning of how the bank had got its money back from the burglars, and Jack Gardiner's name was printed in full as the hero of the affair.

When Jack arrived at the bank, which was not open, he found a crowd around the door reading a notice by the bank examiner which stated that owing to the recovery of the stolen funds the bank would doubtless be able to resume business in a few days.

There was also a notice signed by the president which stated that the institution was perfectly solvent, but owing to official red tape a few days must elapse before business could be resumed.

Jack pushed the button, and when the janitor came to the door he asked for the president.

"He hasn't arrived yet," replied the factotum. "However, you may come in and wait for him. I expect he will be here any time."

So Jack entered the bank, and half an hour later the president arrived.

"I called to ask you what I had better do with that \$1,000 the bank presented to me," said Jack. "I don't want to carry it around with me, for I might lose it, or it might be stolen from me. What would you advise me to do?"

"If you wish to leave it with the bank as a special or time deposit, you will receive interest on it at the rate of 3 per cent. per annum. Or you can take it over to the Blackton Savings Bank and deposit it on interest. In either case the money will be perfectly safe and at your disposal at any time you call for it, and it will be earning from \$30 to \$40 a year interest as long as you do not draw upon it," said the president. "On the whole, I think you'd better de-

posit it in the savings bank. I'll send a clerk with you to see that the matter is put through all right."

"Thank you, sir. I shall want to use about \$20 of it for a new suit of clothes and other things. I suppose the savings bank will give me the change."

"It would be a pity to break the amount for such a small sum, therefore I will make you a present of \$25 to buy you the new suit and whatever else you need," said the president.

Jack objected at first to receiving any more money, but was prevailed upon to accept the \$25 as a personal present from the head of the bank.

A clerk was sent with the boy to the savings bank and he made his deposit in due form and received a passbook, though some objection was raised because he could not give any address.

This was settled by the clerk giving the Blackton bank as his address.

Jack then arranged to leave his bankbook with the commercial bank, leaving his signature with it as a means of identification.

He then bought a new suit, a few other needed things and a substantial suitcase.

He placed all his personal property in the suitcase and discarded the threadbare carpet-bag.

"I guess I can afford to buy a ticket to Willowdale by rail," he mused. "That will save me a day's tramp over the road. Then I can look for a job in that neighborhood. Maybe I won't tackle a farm, after all. Willowdale is on Lake Michigan. I may be able to get something better in that town. Now that I'm worth \$1,000 I feel like a different kind of boy. If it wasn't for the fact that my father is in the State prison I believe I'd almost feel happy. I don't believe he ever committed that crime. He swore on the stand that he didn't, and nobody saw him do it. But he wasn't able to prove his innocence, and as everybody believed him guilty, he had to go to prison for life. It was not only hard on him, but it killed my mother and made a tramp of me. I wonder if the truth will ever come to light?"

After dinner Jack gave up his room at the hotel and took the afternoon train for Willowdale, where he arrived about dark, and registered at a cheap hotel on the European plan, to which he had been recommended by the man who sat with him on the same double seat on the train.

He didn't fancy the hotel much, particularly after having had a look at his room, and congratulated himself on the fact that he had not brought his \$1,000 with him.

He took supper at the restaurant on the ground floor, which was on a par with the hotel itself, both in price and in the quality of the viands furnished its patrons.

The hotel was near the lake front, close to the wharves that were occupied with schooners, two and three-masters; sloops, and various other small craft.

Jack spent an hour walking around the neighborhood, chiefly inhabited by the poorer class of people in town, and then retired to his room, fully determined to find different lodgings for himself on the morrow, that is, if he saw any prospects of remaining in the town.

Undressing himself, he jumped into bed and was soon asleep.

Two hours later he was suddenly awakened by a crash in the adjoining room on the left, and a heavy body struck the wall against which his bed lay with a concussion that seemed to shake the house.

The walls between the rooms were not lathed and plastered like most buildings, but consisted merely of a partition of boards, papered over on both sides to deceive the eye.

As Jack sat bolt upright in bed, somewhat bewildered by the noise and the shakeup, a loud roar of laughter reached his ears from the next room.

So distinct was it that it almost seemed as if no partition interposed between the rooms.

"Vell, dash me bloomin' heyes!" cried a voice in cockney tones. "Vy don't they 'ave chairs what vill 'old a chap hup in these 'ere 'otels? Powder me blue! If I don't believe hit was honly 'eld together with glue. It's a houtrage on the public. I might 'ave broken me back. I don't see that there's hanythink to larf hat."

"It was funny to see the way the chair collapsed under you, Cutcliffe, and you pitched against that wall as if you meant to bore your way into the next room," said a voice that Jack recognized as Dick Swivel's.

A scrambling sound followed as if the Englishman was picking himself up.

"You made of yourself a tomfool that time. Cutcliffe!"

chuckled a third party in the room whom Jack had no trouble in identifying as Guerrero.

The cockney crook uttered a smothered growl.

"You'll have to sit on the bed now," said Swivel. "Do it gently, for I expect to sleep on it when we get back from the job we have on to-night."

Another brief spell of silence followed.

Jack fairly gasped at his proximity to those three bank robbers, especially the Mexican, for whom he had an especial dread.

It seemed very singular to him that that scoundrel should come across his path for the third time in such a short interval, and apparently without design.

He began to wonder if the possession of the mysterious old English penny had some peculiar influence in drawing them together.

He hated to think what would happen if Guerrero by some chance learned that he had the clue to the treasure which the rascal had been trying to get hold of for a matter of fifteen years.

It struck him as rather odd that the Mexican had not returned to the cottage in Wallingford so long inhabited by himself and Andrew Marven, and made a thorough search of the place by daylight.

As a matter of fact this is exactly what Guerrero did, but so deftly had he conducted his investigations that he left no sign of his movements on the premises.

After his failure to find the copper coin he began to suspect that it might be in Jack's possession.

As this was merely a supposition, and he was interested in a couple of shady jobs that promised tangible results, he did not bother with the boy, feeling confident that he could track him down later.

He was all the more certain of this when he recognized his quarry in the boy Dick Swivel extended his hospitality to, and learned from Dick that Jack was looking for a job on some farm between Blackton and Willowdale.

The three rascals were in high glee over the success of their Blackton bank job until they discovered that their plunder had vanished in the most mysterious manner.

Then their consternation and fury hardly knew bounds.

To make matters worse, the presence of a couple of detectives in the neighborhood made it dangerous for them to attempt any investigation.

Accordingly, they made tracks for Willowdale at once to put through the second job on their programme.

This was the looting of the home of a little old gentleman named Matthew Warden, a well-known antiquarian and collector, who lived with his young niece and three servants in a roomy old turreted house in the midst of spacious grounds on the lake shore a mile outside of Willowdale.

Matthew Warden was reputed to have one of the most interesting as well as valuable private collections of antique gold and silver vessels, ornaments and rare coins in the country, which he had accumulated during thirty years of research in foreign lands, and at the expenditure of a considerable fortune.

Guerrero had had his eye on this treasure trove, as he considered it, for a long time, but circumstances over which he had no control prevented him reaching Willowdale, with skillful associates, until now.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK VISITS THE STATION-HOUSE.

"I 'ope there won't be no fluke habout the 'ousebreakin' job we're on to-night," Jack heard Cutcliffe say.

"Don't you worry," replied Swivel. "We'll pull it off all right, eh, Guerrero?"

The Mexican nodded confidently.

"I was out to the place this afternoon looking around," continued Dick. "They've a new gratin' set in the window of the pantry, as if they thought that was the only way a gent of our profession would try to get in by, and all the lower windows are protected by steel shutters."

"Steel shutters!" cried the Britisher. "It's goin' to be a 'ard matter to force one of them."

"What do we want to waste our energy on steel shutters for when there are easier ways of gettin' inside?"

"Let's 'ear habout the easier ways."

"The kitchen windows are protected by iron bars, but I

discovered that the wood around them is as soft and rotten as touchwood, and the bars can be wrenched out as easy as if they were stuck into putty."

"Then we ought to 'ave no trouble gettin' in at all."

"Not the least. It's a cinch."

"But hafter we're in vill ve 'ave hany trouble gettin' at the swag? Does the old gent keep 'is curios locked up in safes, or what?"

"He keeps the stuff in a strong room," said the Mexican. "Our tools will easily force the door of that, and then all we have to do is to fill our bags."

"We'll make enough out of to-night's job to make amends for the loss of our bank swag. Where in thunder that went to I suppose we'll never find out," said Swivel.

"Don't bring up that 'orrible matter. I don't believe I'll never get over the loss of all them bills. If I 'adn't seen them with my hown eyes I'd believe ve never carried the stuff hoff. I 'ope what ve get away with to-night won't take wings to itself and disappear like the hother."

"I'll guarantee that it won't," replied Swivel.

"'Ow far is the 'ouse from 'ere?"

"About a mile and a half from this place."

"We'll go by 'the quickest way. What time vill ve make a start? It's 'arf-past eleven now."

"We have lots of time, for we can get there in half an hour," replied Swivel.

Jack, who heard every word that was spoken in the next room, was not a little excited to learn the character of the job the rascals had on hand for that night.

After more jingling of glasses the crooks began to discuss the nature of the swag they expected to lift, and how they should get rid of it to the best advantage.

Thus Jack learned the name of the man they were going to rob, and his hobby as a collector of rare and valuable curios.

While his ears lost not a word of the conversation carried on in the next room, his mind was busy figuring on how he could frustrate their project, and save the old collector from being robbed.

He realized that he had very little time in which to act, and that he was under the great disadvantage of being a stranger in the town.

"I must get into my clothes at once and try and find my way to the police station. I'll put the authorities wise to the plans of these rascals, and the police ought to be able not only to put a spoke in their game, but to capture them as well. It would give me a whole lot of satisfaction to get that Mexican put behind the bars. I'd rather see him pinched than both the others, for he is what I call a bad man."

Jack hastily dressed himself, and having satisfied himself that the three crooks were making no immediate preparations to leave the room, he slipped downstairs to the street, which was almost deserted at that hour.

The shops in that vicinity were shut up, and no lights were to be seen but those that shone from the cheap groceries, and from an occasional tenement window.

Jack had not the slightest idea where the police station was, but he hoped to meet a policeman, or some respectable person who would be able to direct him.

The boy hurried up the street for two blocks without meeting a soul, and then he came upon a corner drugstore which was being shut up for the night.

"Can you tell me where the police station is?" Jack asked the red-headed clerk.

The young man stared at him a moment and then said: "Are you a stranger in town?"

"Yes," replied the boy.

"You're not looking for a free lodging for the night, are you?" the clerk continued, looking Jack over and noting the fact that he seemed too respectable appearing for that.

"No," replied our hero impatiently.

"The station is three blocks up on the next street that way," and the clerk waved his hand.

"Thank you," said Jack, who left the store and hastened in the indicated direction.

A red lamp over the front portal of a certain building bore the words "Police Station."

That was enough to tell Jack that he had reached the right place.

He sprang up half a dozen steps and entered a good-sized room off a small hall.

A man in uniform was seated at a desk reading a newspaper.

"Well, what do you want, young man?" he inquired.
"I've come with information about a burglary that is to be committed to-night," Jack answered.

"What's that?" asked the man, dropping the paper and looking at his young visitor sharply.

Jack repeated his remark and added:

"The house that is to be robbed is about a mile outside the town, on the shore of the lake. A collector of rare antiques and coins, named Matthew Warden, lives there."

The officer knew the place and the man.

In fact, there was scarcely anybody in Willowdale who didn't know the estate called Red Gables and its owner by reputation.

"How did you learn that Mr. Warden's place was to be robbed to-night?" asked the officer, almost incredulously.

Jack told him how he was a stranger in Willowdale, having only arrived at the town that evening by rail from Blackton.

"A man I met on the train referred me to the Lake House as a cheap place for me to put up," went on the boy. "It's cheap enough, but I can't say that I like the place. I went to bed about nine o'clock, and a while ago I was woken up by a racket in the adjoining room. The partition between the rooms appeared to be only boards covered with paper. I could easily hear all that was said in the room. I was astonished to recognize the voices of three crooks—"

"Three crooks!" interrupted the officer. "How did you know they were crooks?"

"Because I have met them before."

"Where and under what circumstances?"

"Two of them—a Mexican named Guerrero, and an Englishman named Cutcliffe, I met in Wallingford under circumstances that would take too long to explain now. I can assure you they are tough characters. The third is a young fellow about twenty, whose name is Dick Swivel. The three are the men who robbed the Blackton bank the other night. You must have heard about it."

"Of course I heard about it, and we have received instructions to look out for the three rascals, but only a meager description of them was furnished us by the Blackton police. How do you know these are the fellows who robbed the bank?"

"I know they are; but it would take too long to explain now."

"By the way, what is your name, and what brought you to Willowdale?"

"My name is Jack Gardiner, and I came here to look for work."

"Jack Gardiner!" ejaculated the officer. "Seems to me your name is familiar to me. Are you the boy who recovered the money stolen from the Blackton bank?"

"Yes, sir."

"I read about the matter in the Blackton News. It was a clever piece of work on your part, young man. Now proceed with this story of yours."

Jack told the officer all about the details of the contemplated robbery of Mr. Warden's house that night, just as he overheard it through the thin partition that divided his room from that in which the crooks were smoking and drinking.

"You ought to be a detective, young man," smiled the officer grimly, when Jack had concluded. "I will send three policemen with you to the Lake House to arrest these rascals."

"That might be a waste of time," replied Jack, "for it is half-past twelve now, and they may have started for the scene of the robbery. Wouldn't it be better to send the policemen direct to Mr. Warden's home? I'll go with them. If you captured these fellows in the act of trying to enter the house you would have them dead to rights."

"Your suggestion is a good one and I'll follow it."

The officer summoned three policemen, who were sleeping in an adjoining room, and gave them explicit directions as to what they were to do.

Then he despatched them, with Jack, to the scene of the proposed robbery.

CHAPTER IX.

A DESPERATE AFFRAY.

Jack walked along with the policeman who was given charge of the squad, and during the walk told him a great deal about the crooks that he had had no opportunity to divulge to the officer in charge of the station-house.

"You seem to be a smart young fellow," said the policeman. "You are bound to get a great deal of credit out of this night's work, which, together with what you did in connection with the Blackton bank robbery, is sure to bring you into public notice. You'll have no difficulty in getting work in this town after the facts have appeared in the paper."

It took the party nearly an hour to reach Red Gables from the police station, and they entered the grounds with due caution, for it was not improbable that the three crooks had already arrived on the premises.

"The young chap named Swivel said that the iron bars guarding the kitchen windows were easy to force out of place," said Jack. "They will no doubt seek an entrance into the house that way. We had better examine those windows, and if they have not yet been tampered with it will be a sign that the crooks have not come yet."

The policeman in charge of the squad thought the boy's suggestion a good one, and so the party made its way to the back of the old turreted mansion where the kitchen was.

One of the officers went forward and investigated the windows.

He returned with word that none of the bars had been touched.

"Then we're ahead of the rascals," said the chief policeman. "It would be an advantage if we were inside the house, for there is no suitable place for us to conceal ourselves on the lawn hereabout. I'll go around in front and arouse somebody inside with as little noise as possible."

The officer went away, leaving Jack and the other two policemen standing in the shadow of the kitchen.

After what seemed to be an endless interval the kitchen door was opened and the officer called to his companions and the boy to enter the house.

The door was immediately closed and barred, and the head officer led the way to the dining-room, the windows of which were protected by steel shutters, that when closed gave the apartment the air of a hermetically sealed room.

Every other room on the ground floor, except the kitchen, was similarly guarded against invasion, the iron bars of that room being relied on as an ample barrier to surreptitious entry.

A little old, smooth-faced man, in a flowered dressing-gown, stood near the lamp which furnished illumination to the dining-room.

This was Matthew Warden, who had been aroused by the officer's ringing at the front door-bell, and had descended to find out what his late visitor wanted.

When he stated that he was a policeman sent on urgent business the old collector unbarred the front door and bade him enter.

The officer then explained the situation in a few words.

Mr. Warden led the way to the kitchen door and admitted Jack and the two policemen.

Jack was then called upon to tell Mr. Warden how he found out that the house was to be robbed that night, and while he was telling his story the head officer sent his two companions into the kitchen to keep watch for the approach of the house-breakers.

Matthew Warden was clearly disturbed as he listened to Jack's statement.

When the boy had concluded, he said:

"Young man, you have done me a great service in notifying the police and bringing a force here sufficient to cope with those rascals. I shall see that you lose nothing for putting yourself out in my interest. What is your name?"

Jack told him.

"Now, officer," said the old man, "you are at liberty to put in force any plan you may have formed for the capture of these burglars. I will assist you myself in every way I can. I presume you are armed?"

"Yes, sir," replied the policeman, "we have our revolvers and night-sticks."

"Here is a revolver for you, Gardiner," said the old gentleman, producing the weapon from one of the pockets of his dressing-gown and handing it to Jack. "I have its mate myself. The five of us ought to be able to capture the robbers. I hope we may be able to do it without arousing my niece and the two women servants on the top floor. I think we should be able to take the rascals by surprise after they have entered the kitchen."

"Yes, sir. That is my idea," replied the officer. "What time is it now?"

"Nearly two o'clock," replied Mr. Warden, nodding toward the handsome little ormolu clock that stood on the mantel, noting the fleeting seconds with a soft, musical sound.

"They should be here soon if they are coming to-night," said the policeman. "We will, if you please, turn the light down low and adjourn to the kitchen."

They found an officer stationed at each of the two windows watching the lawn.

They reported having seen nothing suspicious as yet.

The chief officer placed one of his men behind the entry door and the other beneath the kitchen table.

The old gentleman was directed to hide in the big closet near the pantry.

"Now, Gardiner, you keep watch from that window, and I will do the same from this. As soon as the rascals appear and begin work on the bars you retire to the entry, and be ready to rush out when I give the signal," said the policeman in charge.

"All right, sir," replied Jack.

For twenty minutes nothing turned up, and the kitchen was as silent as it was before the arrival of the party, then Jack made out a movement among the trees on the edge of the lawn, and presently he saw three forms appear and advance toward the house.

"Here they come, sir," he whispered excitedly to the officer at the other window.

The policeman came over and looked out.

He easily made out the three crooks in the semi-gloom of the lawn.

The rascals approached the kitchen end of the building with some caution and stopped near one of the windows.

Dick Swivel carried the black bag that Jack remembered well.

After a short consultation Dick put the bag down, opened it and took from it a short steel implement.

With this he commenced work on the cement that held one of the bars in place.

It was old and crumbly and came away in chunks.

After ten minutes' labor Swivel pulled a heavy, short crowbar out of the bag and handed it to Cutcliffe.

He placed it behind the weakened bar, and exerting his great strength, for he was a powerful man, bent the bar outward far enough to raise the weakened end out of its socket.

Working the bar back and forth, he loosened the upper end, and finally pulled it out altogether.

This programme was repeated on each of the four bars of that particular window, and then nothing opposed the rascals but the window sashes.

A glazier's diamond was then brought into play by Cutcliffe, while Swivel attached some kind of an adhesive pad to one of the panes.

The English crook cut the glass all around, then gave it a smart rap and it came away without noise in Swivel's hand.

For Cutcliffe to insert his arm through the opening and turn the catch was but the work of a moment.

Then he cautiously raised the lower sash and thrust his head into the apparently tenantless room.

To make sure that everything was all right before they ventured inside, the crook took an electric dark-lantern out of his pocket and flashed the light around the interior of the kitchen.

He saw nothing that aroused his suspicion.

"Give me a lift, me covy, and in I go," he said to Dick Swivel.

Dick gave him the lift and he scrambled in through the window.

The younger man followed, and the Mexican came last of all.

On the principle that it is the part of wisdom to provide a ready avenue for escape in case of an emergency, Swivel removed the bar from the kitchen door, unlocked it, and left it ajar.

The head officer, believing that the moment for action had now arrived, gave the signal and at the same time flashed his bullseye light on the burglars.

To say that they were taken completely by surprise would but faintly describe their consternation on finding themselves confronted by three officers and two other persons, all with pointed revolvers.

"Throw up your hands, my laddybucks!" cried the officer. "You're all pinched!"

Apparently the crooks had not the ghost of a show to

evade the inevitable, and the cops expected little resistance from them.

They didn't know how desperate and determined were the men they were dealing with.

The officer's words acted like the touch of a galvanic battery on the momentarily stupefied crooks.

Quick as a flash their hands sought their jacket pockets, three revolvers flashed in the electric light, and three weapons spoke almost as one.

The three officers, whose revolvers also flashed simultaneously, went down, each struck by one of the bullets.

The crooks were unhurt by the balls that hummed close to their heads and buried themselves in the wood of the kitchen wall.

Then it was that Jack, who had reserved his fire, covered Cutcliffe and pulled the trigger.

As the flash of the boy's weapon lit up the room the English crook fell with a groan.

Guerrero raised his revolver to shoot Jack, whose form he only saw indistinctly, when Matthew Warden, from the shelter of the closet, fired at him.

The bullet severed one of the Mexican's fingers, causing him to drop his weapon.

With an imprecation in Spanish he shouted something.

Dick Swivel, who was near the kitchen door, swung it open, and through this avenue of egress Guerrero and Swivel made their escape in a twinkling, followed by another bullet from Jack's revolver.

CHAPTER X.

JACK ACCEPTS A FINE OFFER.

Jack rushed after them and discharged his weapon at their disappearing forms, with what result he could not determine, but he did not believe that he had hit either of them.

On his return to the kitchen he found that Mr. Warden had brought the lamp into the kitchen.

Cutcliffe lay unconscious in the middle of the floor, while one of the policemen looked as if he might be badly wounded.

The other two were standing up looking quite pale, and were examining their hurts, which were not serious.

Jack helped them bind up their injuries, while the old gentleman was attending to the more seriously injured man.

As soon as the officers had patched themselves up they turned their attention to Cutcliffe.

He had a bullet in the chest and was a subject for a surgeon.

The hooting had aroused the gardener and general utility man about the place, who slept in the second story of the carriage house.

He dressed and came over to the house to see what was the matter.

He was astonished when he saw the policemen and the wounded burglar in the kitchen.

"William," said Mr. Warden, "we have had a little trouble with burglars, and some of us have been hurt. Harness the gray mare to the light wagon and bring the team to the door."

Jack went with him to expedite matters.

While they were harnessing the horse the boy told the gardener-coachman what had transpired.

"Two of the rascals made their escape, I am sorry to say," concluded Jack. "One of them was the worst of the bunch, and I'd sooner see him behind the bars than the chap we caught, with the young fellow who got off to boot."

As soon as the wagon was brought to the door the wounded officer was lifted into it, together with the injured crook, still unconscious.

One of the other policemen got in also and the head officer climbed up beside William on the seat.

Jack was also about to get into the wagon when the master of the house detained him.

"You must stay here for the rest of the night, my lad, and after breakfast I shall want to talk with you more about those rascals who made this attempt on my house. I suppose you have no objection to accepting my hospitality?"

"Certainly not, sir, if you wish me to stay," replied Jack.

"That is settled, then. Drive on, William."

The man touched up the horse and the wagon rolled away down the gravel path toward the main gate.

"What about this window, sir?" asked Jack, after shutting and barring the kitchen door.

"The only thing we can do is to board it up temporarily," replied the old gentleman. "There is plenty of wood in the cellar, and a hammer and nails."

Mr. Warden lighted the way with the lamp and Jack got the wood and the hammer and nails.

While nailing the boards across the window he saw the burglars' black bag outside, containing their tools.

As soon as he finished the job he went outside and got it.

"Even if these two rascals returned, which is hardly likely, they couldn't get in now without a tool of some kind to force those boards which I have nailed in a pretty solid way," he said to the old gentleman.

"I'm not afraid that we'll be disturbed again to-night," said Mr. Warden, in a confident tone. "Come, I will show you to a room upstairs, and you need not be in a hurry to get up in the morning. Judging from your story, I believe you have nothing on hand for to-morrow that requires your attention."

"No, sir, I have not. I only reached this town last night at six o'clock, and have as yet had no chance to look for work."

"Then you came to Willowdale expecting to get work here?"

"Yes, sir; but I am not sure that I shall succeed."

"Perhaps I can put something in your way."

"If you can, sir, I shall be very much obliged to you."

"Well, we will talk about that to-morrow."

Mr. Warden showed him to a large, comfortable room, and wished him good-night.

"This is a whole lot better than the Lake House," thought Jack, as he looked around the spacious and well-furnished apartment. "The room I had there was a miserable little hole, hardly worth even the moderate price I paid for it. However, it was a good thing for this old gentleman that I put up there. If I hadn't been in a position to overhear the plans of those rascals they would probably have made a clean sweep of all Mr. Warden's treasured curiosities, and that would have been a terrible loss to him. I'm dead sorry that we failed to capture the Mexican. I don't mind Swivel getting off, for bad as he is he did me a good turn in Blackton; but Guerrero is a thoroughly wicked man, and ought to be put where he can do nobody any further harm."

By the time Jack finished his soliloquy he was ready to jump into bed.

He was so tired that the late excitement did not keep him long awake, and inside of ten minutes he was sound asleep.

Morning was well advanced when he awoke and found the sun streaming into the room.

For a moment he gazed around in surprise at his surroundings, then the stirring events of the night crowded fast upon his mind, and he knew where he was, and how he came to be there.

He got up and dressed himself.

While he was combing his hair there came a knock at the door, and the little old gentleman walked in and wished him good-morning.

Mr. Warden now looked like the refined and cultured gentleman he was.

He treated Jack in a kind and friendly way, and they went down to the breakfast-room together, where the boy found a lovely young girl of perhaps seventeen standing by one of the windows that looked out on the broad, velvety lawn.

As the master of the house entered the room, followed by Jack, she turned around and regarded the boy with not a little interest.

The old gentleman had already told her under what obligations he was to Jack for saving the house from being robbed, which meant the looting of all his treasured possessions, and she felt almost as grateful to their young visitor as her uncle.

"My dear, this is Jack Gardiner, whom I spoke to you about a little while ago. Jack, my lad, this is my niece, Miss Dora Davenport."

The young people bowed and smiled, and said they were happy to make each other's acquaintance.

Mr. Warden took his place at the head of the table, Miss Dora sat at the foot, where she presided over the coffee urn, and Jack took a seat on the side, midway between them.

By the time the meal was over Jack felt quite at home among his new acquaintances.

He was satisfied that Mr. Warden was an uncommonly fine old gentleman, and that Miss Dora was the nicest girl he had ever come in contact with.

After breakfast the master of Red Gables invited Jack into his library.

"Well, my lad, will you tell me why you came to Willowdale in search of work, in preference to going to some more populated town? Willowdale is only a small place, and does not, I imagine, offer any great encouragement to a ambitious lad such as you seem to be."

"I came to Willowdale because I was told in Blackton that, being situated on the lake, it offered more chances of employment than most small towns," replied Jack.

"That is true if one is not particular what kind of work he takes up with."

"I'm willing to do anything that's honest to earn a living."

"Am I to understand that you have no parents, and that you are entirely dependent on your own exertions for a livelihood?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long have you been providing for yourself?"

"Ever since my mother died, about four years ago."

"Have you no relatives at all?"

"None that have shown any interest in me."

"How have you made a living since your mother died?"

"In many ways," replied Jack, and he mentioned several of the positions he had filled at different times. "I had a particularly hard time of it during the first two years," he continued. "When I walked into Wallingford Christmas morning, two years ago, I was about down and out. If a man named Andrew Marven had not given me shelter I guess I should have seen my finish then and there. He took a fancy to me and offered me a home, though he was not very well off himself. I accepted his offer, but practically kept the pot boiling myself, though I scarcely had a steady job all the time I lived in Wallingford. Finally Andrew Marven took sick and the doctor I got for him did him no real good, so that he just lingered on till he died a week or so ago. As soon as he was buried I started out to find a job on a farm somewhere."

"A job on a farm!" ejaculated the old gentleman.

"Yes, sir, that was my idea, though I had never worked on a farm in my life. It was while walking into Blackton that I made the acquaintance of one of the crooks who tried to rob your house early this morning."

"Indeed."

Jack then detailed the particulars of his acquaintance with Dick Swivel.

To this he added the story of the robbery of the Blackton bank by the same three crooks concerned in the attempted burglary of Red Gables.

He astonished Mr. Warden with the narrative of how he had recovered all the stolen bank funds, returned the money to the bank, and received a reward of \$1,000, which he had deposited in the Blackton Savings Bank.

"Then I started yesterday afternoon for Willowdale, and that brings me down to the point where, as I related to you this morning in the dining-room, I discovered the plans of the three crooks to rob your house," concluded Jack.

"The active interest you took in saving my property from the hands of the despoilers has placed me under the deepest of obligations to you. Under such circumstances I shall not be satisfied until I have done something to testify my appreciation for your services. Now, I doubt much if you would be willing to accept a money consideration."

"No, sir, I should not accept any pay from you for what I did. It was my duty to try and save your property the moment I became aware of the purposes of those rascals. You are welcome to my small services in the matter."

"You underestimate your services when you call them small. It would have been a very serious matter to me, indeed, if those men had carried my treasures away and thus have destroyed one of the most unique private collections of antiques in this country, for, remember, those rascals, knowing that it would be a dangerous matter for them to try and dispose of the articles as they stood, would have broken up and melted curios worth thousands owing to their rarity in order to obtain the gold and silver metal that was worth only hundreds."

Jack was willing to admit that the looting of Mr. Warden's strong room would have been a real misfortune, in more senses than one.

"Now, my lad, to get down to business, how would you like a situation in this house?" said Mr. Warden.

"A situation in this house?" ejaculated Jack.

"Yes, as my secretary and general assistant."

"If I could fill the bill I'd like it first-class; but I'm afraid—"

"You can fill the bill all right," replied the old gentleman in a confident tone. "Your duties will be light. Two hours a day at the outside will be all I shall require of you. The rest of your time will be at your own disposal. The fact of the matter is, my boy, I have taken a liking for you, and I think you will make an excellent companion for my niece, who, I am afraid, finds Red Gables rather a lonesome spot without some one of her own age to consort with. Now, what do you say to my offer? Will you accept it, and make the Gables your home till further notice? Your remuneration will be \$30 a month, the greater part of which you ought to be able to save."

"It seems too good to be true," replied the delighted boy; "but if you really think you can make use of me I shall gladly accept your offer."

"Then I consider the matter settled. We will now go to town, for we have to appear at the examination of that rascal we captured, that is, if he is in a condition to be brought into court to-day. The carriage will be around in a few moments, so go upstairs and get your hat."

Jack did so and twenty minutes later he and Mr. Warden were being driven toward Willowdale.

CHAPTER XI.

JACK BECOMES A LAND-OWNER.

On their arrival at the police court they found that Cutcliffe was under the care of the police surgeon and would not be in shape for a week to appear for examination.

Mr. Warden and Jack then drove around to the police station to find out if any efforts had been made to capture the Mexican and young Swivel.

They learned that several officers were out on the case.

"Now we'll go to the Lake House and get your suitcase," said the old gentleman to Jack.

As soon as the suitcase was in the buggy they started back for Red Gables, where they arrived in time for lunch.

Dora Davenport, who had been quite taken with Jack Gardiner, was delighted to learn that the boy was going to live at the house in the capacity of literary assistant to Mr. Warden.

She had long yearned for the companionship of somebody about her own age, and now this new arrangement filled the bill to her satisfaction.

"I am ever so glad you are going to stay with us, Mr. Gardiner," she said after lunch. "Your presence here will make the house a little more lively."

"I am glad, too, that I am going to stay," replied the boy. "I mean to do everything I can to give satisfaction to Mr. Warden."

"You will find him easy to please. He is a nice old gentleman."

"I think he is myself."

"He is greatly wrapped up in his curios. He has spent a fortune on them, and he still has agents on the lookout for rare coins and other antiques."

"And some day when he dies what do you suppose will become of them? Will they be sold to the highest bidder?"

"No. He has willed his collection to the State with the understanding that they are to be kept intact and placed on free exhibition for the benefit of the public."

"He is a liberal-minded old gentleman, isn't he?"

"Yes. He takes a great pride in his collection, and he doesn't want it scattered broadcast after his death."

Dora described many of the articles that her uncle had accumulated, and then remarked that Mr. Warden would probably show his treasures to Jack in a day or two.

She then took the boy around the grounds, and he found that Mr. Warden's estate was quite extensive, extending for a quarter of a mile along the lake front, where it ended at the foot of a high bluff overlooking the water.

Perched on the top of the bluff was an old, weather-beaten two-story building.

"Who lives there?" asked Jack.

"Nobody," answered Dora.

"The bluff, you say, doesn't belong to Mr. Warden?"

"No. Our property ends at this wire fence."

"I suppose the person who owns the bluff can't find a tenant for the house?"

"Nobody knows who the owner of the bluff is, and nobody seems to care. That house was there when Mr. Warden bought this property. In fact, it's been there so long that nobody seems to know when it was built."

"Let's go up and look at it," said Jack.

He helped Dora over the fence and to the top of the bluff they went.

The house was a substantial structure and had stood the weather mighty well, considering that it hadn't been painted or repaired within the memory of the oldest resident of that locality.

The glass in the front windows, that faced the lake and consequently were exposed to the full sweep of the winds across that big body of water, were broken or cracked in the majority of cases; but those in the rear, where a small one-story extension jutted out from the main building, were in good shape.

Jack tried the doors and found them all locked or otherwise secured.

The window sashes were also immovable, so that there was no way of getting into the building without breaking in, and nobody had attempted to do that yet, during all the years the house had stood untenanted.

In fact, nobody in the vicinity took enough interest in the building to consider it worth exploring.

"I should think if the owner was alive he'd either make some use of his property or sell it for what it might fetch," remarked Jack, as he and Dora stood gazing at the old structure. "I don't see any sense in a solid-looking house like that being abandoned to go to ruin."

"My uncle thinks the owner is dead and that he left no heirs," said the girl.

"I guess he's right. In that case it's a wonder the property hasn't been sold for taxes."

"The county has just advertised it for sale for thirty years' unpaid taxes. It will come under the hammer day after to-morrow."

"That so? How much property goes with the house?"

"Just the bluff and the land in a straight line as far as the road, about ten acres altogether."

"Do you know if it goes cheap I'd like to buy it."

"You would?" Dora cried in some astonishment.

"Yes. I'd like to own a piece of ground facing on the lake like this does. I've an idea I could make money out of it one of these days."

"How could you? This is nearly two miles from town, and I don't believe you could get anybody to come here and live. If you have any money I think you would be foolish to invest it in this place."

"That is where you and I differ, Miss Dora. I have an idea this would make an ideal location for a summer hotel. If I owned the property I'd advertise it for sale for that purpose, and I think I could make a good profit out of my investment."

"You might do that," replied Dora thoughtfully.

"I have \$1,000 in the Blackton Savings Bank. I'd be willing to put that, or a part of it, in this land, and then see if I could sell it for double at least of what I paid for it. There are lots of ways of making money in this world, and that is one way to my thinking. I have a great mind to speak to Mr. Warden about it."

"You can do so. He would help you if he thought it was to your interest."

They talked the matter over a while longer, Jack growing quite enthusiastic over the project, and then they returned to Red Gables.

Mr. Warden was sitting on the veranda overlooking the lake when they came up.

He wanted to know where they had been and Jack told him.

Dora went inside and left them talking.

"Would you like to see my collection of coins and antiques?" asked the old gentleman at length.

"Yes, sir; very much, indeed," replied Jack.

The master of the house got up and led the way to his library.

The strong room where his collection was kept was right off the library, and protected by a steel door with a combination lock like a safe.

The old gentleman opened the door and ushered Jack inside the room.

It was very dark, as there were no windows to it.

Mr. Warden soon threw light on the subject by pulling down an old-fashioned bronze lamp, which hung from the center of the ceiling, and igniting its wick.

It threw a soft glow about the apartment.

"This lamp came from an ancient tomb in Egypt. It is 3,000 years old at least, and I purchased it for \$10,000. I consider it a bargain, for I could get twice that sum for it from any museum in the country. Indeed, I was offered 4,000 pounds for it by a representative of the British Museum as soon as he inspected it."

Jack looked at the old metal lamp in great wonder.

He saw that it seemed to be a sort of well or receptacle in which a peculiar-looking wick floated upon the surface of the oil.

His attention, however, was soon attracted to other things equally as odd, and as he went from one article to another Mr. Warden gave him a brief history of the article with its age and the amount it had cost its present owner.

Altogether, the collection of vases, statuettes, brass, bronze and stone ornaments, carved silver dishes of the fifteenth and later centuries, and an endless variety of small articles of every conceivable shape, was most interesting and remarkable.

Then Mr. Warden unlocked his cabinet of rare coins—gold, silver, brass, bronze and iron specimens, of varying shape, size and thickness.

He took out the rarest of these and showed them to Jack, explaining their history and value, reserving the balance for another occasion, as it was close on to the tea hour.

After the meal, while Jack and the old gentleman were sitting on the veranda in the gathering dusk, looking out across the dark green waters of the lake, the boy brought up the subject of the ten-acre piece of ground with its house on the top of the bluff.

He surprised Mr. Warden by saying that he was really anxious to become the owner of it if he could get it cheap, and he thought he could if it was to be sold for the taxes, which could not amount to such a big sum even in thirty years, with the interest added.

"I've no doubt it could be bought in for less than \$1,000," said the old gentleman, "but the difficulty that confronts you, my lad, is that being under age you could not legally acquire real estate in your own name."

That was a dampener for Jack, and it looked as if his scheme was nipped in the bud.

"Still that could be got around," said Mr. Warden.

"How?" asked Jack eagerly.

"I could take over the title in my own name for you."

"Would you do that?"

"To be sure I would. I'll tell you what I'll do. I think so well of your plan that I will attend the sale of this property and buy it in if it goes cheap. Whatever sum it costs you can repay me out of your savings bank account. Then I will make arrangements about the guardianship, and you can consider the land your own."

Jack was delighted with this arrangement, which was duly carried out, the property going at auction for about \$800, which amount Jack drew from the Blackton Savings Bank and paid over to Mr. Warden.

CHAPTER XII.

TRYING TO READ THE PUZZLE OF THE COPPER COIN.

A week from the day that Jack became an inmate of Red Gables, Cutcliffe, the English crook, was so far recovered from his wound that he was able to present himself in the police court for examination.

Jack and Mr. Warden were notified to be present to give their evidence.

The testimony of Jack and Mr. Warden and the three policemen who had accompanied the boy to Red Gables the morning of the projected burglary, was sufficient to make a strong case out against Cutcliffe, and he was held for trial at the next term of the circuit court.

Jack got on very nicely with Mr. Warden.

With the boy's assistance the little old gentleman began to make up a catalogue of his curios.

Jack and the old gentleman worked at this catalogue about two hours every morning, usually from ten to twelve—the rest of the day the boy could put in as he chose.

One bright, sunny afternoon Jack and Dora tramped gaily

over to the bluff and took their seats on a big stone at the back of the house.

From this point they could look out over the lake around the corner of the house, while in the other direction they had a fine sweeping view of the countryside for miles around.

As they sat there in the sunshine it occurred to Jack to tell Dora about the strange legacy he had received from Andrew Marven, and to show her the coin which was supposed to contain the clue to a considerable treasure.

So he told the girl about that night of storm and darkness when the angel of death was hovering above that miserable little cottage on the outskirts of Wallingford.

He narrated how the dying man had called him to the bed and handed him the curious-looking old English coin, one side of which had been smoothed down and then covered with letters and figures whose arrangement appeared to have no meaning whatever.

"Andrew Marven told me that he tried for fifteen years to find out the meaning of those letters and figures, but was unable to discover the key to the puzzle. He said they furnished the clue to a large treasure, and that he knew of only one man able to read their meaning."

"Who was that?" asked Dora.

"You'll be astonished when I tell you that the man is the Mexican crook the police have been recently looking for in connection with the attempted burglary of the Gables."

"Have you that coin with you? I should like to see it."

"I carry it all the time attached to a cord around my neck," replied Jack.

He put his fingers under his collar and pulled out the George III copper coin.

"It's a heavy coin, isn't it? I should hate to have to carry many of those around in my pocket all day," laughed Jack as Dora took it in her fingers to examine.

"Do you really believe that this odd arrangement of letters and figures forms a clue to a real treasure?"

"I've Andrew Marven's word for it that it does. That is all I know about it."

Dora studied the figures and letters attentively for some moments.

This is the way the puzzle ran:

H on B 2 m NW fr W
2 f NE fr SE c H
T b d N D 5 f
2 N 1 8 7 6

"'H on B 2 m NW fr W,'" she said, reading the first line across the coin. "Now what can that mean?"

"That's what I'd like to know," laughed Jack. "If you and I could put any sense in that we could probably decipher the other lines."

"Do you know puzzles of this kind interest me," said the girl. "When we get back to the house I want you to copy those four lines for me. I'm going to study them. I once discovered the meaning of a pretty difficult cryptogram for my uncle after working over it for a month."

"Did you?" asked Jack eagerly.

"Yes. I might have been a year at it or more if I hadn't accidentally discovered the key one day. After that it was simply a matter of patience."

"Do you think this a cryptogram?"

"No, it doesn't look like one."

"Have you any idea what it is?"

"I imagine the letters may stand for words."

"If that is so it would be like hunting for a needle in a haystack to discover the words they stand for. H might stand for any of a thousand different words, such as horse, house—"

"House!" cried Dora. "That sounds pretty good. House on B. Now what does B stand for?"

"If it referred to this house of mine behind us it would mean bluff, for this house is on a bluff, don't you see?" grinned Jack. "If I can't do any better I can make a good bluff at reading the puzzle," he added with a chuckle.

"Two m might mean two miles. House on bluff two miles NW from W."

"By George!" cried Jack excitedly. "I believe you're getting at it. NW looks to me like northwest. House on bluff two miles northwest from W. If that is right W would stand for some locality, say the name of a town or vil—"

"Why not Willowdale?" exclaimed the girl with glistening eyes.

"Why should it mean Willowdale? There are a million

other places that begin with a W, Wallingford, for instance, where Andrew Marven and I lived for two years. He may have come to Wallingford because he was able to make out that first line himself."

"No," replied Dora in some excitement, "it must mean Willowdale, or else we have hit accidentally upon a most remarkable coincidence."

"How do you make that out?"

"Listen. House on bluff, two miles northwest from Willowdale. That seems to fit the first line, doesn't it?" cried the clever girl.

"I admit it does; but where's the coincidence?"

"Why, this house of yours is on a bluff just about two miles in a northwesterly direction from Willowdale."

"Jumping grasshoppers!" almost shouted Jack. "So it is. Can it be that we've struck the meaning at the first trial?"

CHAPTER XIII.

DICK SWIVEL AND THE MEXICAN.

They continued the study of the puzzle with their heads very close together.

"If 'NW' on the first line really means northwest," said Jack, "then we may reasonably assume that 'NE' and 'SE' on the second line mean northeast and southeast."

"And if 'fr' on the first line means from, it means the same in the second line," said Dora.

"That would make the line read 'Two f (say feet) northeast from southeast c H.' Now what does 'c H' mean?"

"If 'H' on the top line means house it might mean the same in the second line," responded the girl.

"Well, if 'H' means house what does the small 'c' mean?"

"A small 'c' stands as an accepted abbreviation for corner," said Dora, after some moments' thought.

"Then the line would read 'Two feet in a northeasterly direction from the southeast corner of the house.' There's good sense in that, all right," said Jack, both excited and encouraged by the progress they had apparently made in deciphering the odd inscription on the coin.

Jack took out a pencil and a small memorandum book and wrote down their translation of the two lines as follows:

"House on bluff two miles northwest from Willowdale. Two feet northeast from the southeast corner of the house."

Then they applied themselves to the elucidation of the third line.

But here they were badly stuck.

The only thing that seemed at all plain was the "5 f," which they thought meant five feet.

What "T b d N D" stood for they couldn't make out at all.

"Well, we've got lots of time to study this out. It isn't as if this was the only afternoon we had to do it in. I tell you what we'll do, Jack. We must work at this puzzle separately as well as together. Just make me out a copy of the inscription, and write underneath it the meaning we've given to the two lines, and then I'll see what I can do with it myself."

"All right," replied Jack, and he did as she requested him to do.

"It would be remarkable if you found this treasure on your own land, wouldn't it?" Dora said.

"Rather too remarkable. Such things only happen in story books."

They worked a while longer at the problem without any additional success and then gave it up for the time being.

Dora applied herself to the puzzle that evening while Jack talked with Mr. Warden in his library on topics connected with his curios.

On the following afternoon Jack and Dora went to the bluff again.

He carried a shovel over his shoulder and a compass under one arm.

The compass showed that the house faced almost due west, which caused one of the corners to point southeast.

Jack located a spot two feet to the northeast from that corner and started to dig.

Dora watched him with great interest.

With intervals of rest he kept on for an hour, by which time he had dug down to a depth of about six feet.

Another hour was spent in widening the hole.

He had the labor for nothing, for dirt only rewarded his trouble.

Jack pulled out the coin and they looked at the third line with fresh interest.

"T doesn't stand for tree, but treasure, I'll bet," cried Jack suddenly. "And what's the matter with 'b' standing for buried? That gives us 'treasure buried,' which is a good start. Now, if we can guess what the small 'd' stands for we might get a line on the capitals 'N D.' As far as the '5 f' goes, I'm satisfied that it means five feet."

Jack's argument appeared to be good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough to let light in on the riddle.

While they were figuring on the matter they did not notice that a very bright pair of eyes were observing them from a thick bunch of bushes on the edge of the bluff.

These eyes belonged to no less a personage than Dick Swivel.

The young man looked as if nothing would suit him better than to sit down to a square meal.

Just at present he was the picture of hard luck.

The strenuous experience of trying to keep clear of the police evidently did not agree with him.

He was not close enough to Jack and Dora to hear what they said, but he saw that both were much interested in the copper coin Jack wore around his neck.

The Mexican, who we may as well admit was in hiding close by, had not mentioned anything to Swivel about the copper penny he was so eager to secure, so Dick was not particularly interested in the coin Jack wore about his neck.

What bothered him most at that moment was whether Jack and the girl proposed to wander around among the rocks of the bluff to any extent.

If they did they might discover the little cabin in an indentation of the beach below where he and Guerrero were keeping under cover.

Dick concluded that as the case stood it would be the part of wisdom to warn the Mexican of their presence.

So he cautiously made his way down the face of the bluff until he reached the nook in the shore where the cabin stood.

He found Guerrero sitting lazily on a rock, with his customary cigarette between his perfect white teeth, sunning himself like a lizard in the afternoon glow.

The Mexican opened his eyes on hearing his companion's footsteps.

"Who do you suppose is on the top of the bluff near that house?" said Swivel.

"Who—the cops?" asked Guerrero, showing sudden animation.

"No. I don't believe the police are any nearer to us at present than Willowdale."

"Who then, Senor Dick?"

"Jack Gardiner, the lad who is responsible for all our recent troubles."

"Caramba! That boy!" cried the Mexican with a malevolent look that evidently boded no good for Jack.

"Yes, and he's got a girl with him—the girl of the house we failed to rob. He feathered his nest well when he put a spoke in our little game."

"What is he doing on the bluff?"

"Well, they had their heads pretty close together. He was showin' her somethin' he carries around his neck—a copper coin it looked to—"

"What?" roared the Mexican. "A copper coin? You are sure, Senor Dick?" and he seized the young crook by the arm with a grip that made him wince.

"That copper coin shall be worth a fortune to us, Senor Dick," said Guerrero, in a tone so earnest as to command his associate's attention.

"A fortune!"

"Si, senor. That coin will tell me where there is buried \$10,000 in good money of these United States."

"How the dickens can it tell that?"

"You shall see as soon as I get the coin."

"Where is it buried?"

"Somewhere around this end of the lake. Perhaps on this bluff above."

"Then there is only one thing to be done for our own safety. We must capture both Gardiner and the girl. They must be shut up in the hut while we are looking for this treasure. Should we let them escape they'd notify the police of our whereabouts."

"Leave them to me, Senor Dick. They shall not escape me."

"Hist! Here they come now, down the rocks. We must hide or they will see us."

The Mexican glanced up the bluff.

"Come. We will get behind yonder boulder. When I shall say the word we will rush out and take them by surprise. I will attend to the boy. Do you look after the girl."

They crept behind the boulder in question and awaited the coming of Jack and Dora, who, little suspecting that the two crooks the police wanted were in hiding close by, came down the rocks hand in hand as happy as two children.

CHAPTER XIV.

JACK AND DORA MADE PRISONERS.

Slowly Jack and Dora approached the boulder behind which Guerrero and Swivel were concealed.

"Hello!" exclaimed the boy. "There's a hut down here. Guess nobody lives in it, though. Did you know it was there, Dora?"

"No. I've never been down here before."

"Well, we'll take a peep into the cabin and see what it looks like inside."

As they stepped past the boulder Dick Swivel and the Mexican rose suddenly and confronted them.

"Aha! Senor Gardiner, this shall be a pleasant surprise," said Guerrero with an evil grin. "You have made us a call, eh? And with a lady, too. Madre de Dios! I am glad that we meet once more. There is a debt of some size that I wish to repay, and I shall not forget to do it with interest. That can wait, Senor Gardiner. What I wish now is that copper penny you got from Senor Marven. You will hand it over at once, or shall I take it myself?"

He bent a sinister look on Jack as he advanced upon him.

Then with a rush he threw himself on Jack and bore him to the beach.

"Run back up the bluff, Dora, and give the alarm," cried Jack as he struggled in the arms of the Mexican.

Although Dora might have attempted a retreat before Swivel reached her she did not try to do so.

Stooping down she picked up a sharp piece of stone and threw it straight at Guerrero.

It struck the rascal in the face, inflicting an ugly gash.

"Caramba!" he cried furiously. "You shall pay dear for that. Why do you not seize her, Senor Dick?"

Dora picked up a second stone and threw it at Swivel as he made a dart at her.

He dodged quickly and the stone missed his head by a hair.

In another moment he had his arms around the brave girl.

She uttered one shrill scream and then he choked off further utterance on her part by placing one of his hands over her mouth.

Guerrero and the young crook dragged their prisoners into the small hut, built out of the timbers of some wrecked craft, and which was propped against an indentation of the bluff out of sight of the lake.

They were quickly bound and gagged, and when this was accomplished the Mexican tore the copper coin from Jack's neck and gazed at it with the greatest satisfaction.

"At last!" he exclaimed with glittering eyes. "I search for this for fifteen years, now I have it."

"So that is the key to a fortune, Guerrero?" said the young crook.

"Si," replied the Mexican.

"Where is the secret?"

"Here," answered Guerrero, pointing at the four lines of inscription.

"If you can put any sense to them you're a good one, Guerrero," replied Swivel.

"I can do it."

"Then you'd better do it right away, for we haven't any time to waste. Gardiner and the girl will be missed before many hours and a search will be made for them. We must secure this treasure and be away from here before that happens."

The Mexican agreed with his companion, but said it would be too risky to dig for the treasure before dark.

The Mexican took a paper and pencil from his pocket.

After studying the puzzle for a while he began to write down the meaning of it.

Jack and Dora, to whom no attention was paid, looked on from the corner of the hut where they had been placed.

At last Guerrero finished.

"I will read it to you, Senor Dick," he said. "Listen."

The young crook gave his earnest attention.

"First line it shall say, 'House on bluff two miles northwest from W.'"

"What's 'W'?" asked Swivel.

"Only that we are here on the spot I would not know offhand. It shall mean Willowdale, as this bluff is two miles northwest from that town and has a house on it."

"That's right," nodded Swivel. "Then the treasure is on the top of this bluff?"

"Si, Senor Dick."

"Well, go on."

"The second and third lines show where we are to dig."

"Do they? That's good."

"The treasure is buried two fathoms northeast from the southeast corner of the house with tree bearing due north. It is five feet deep."

"What does that '2 N 1 8 7 6' mean?"

"That means the date when the treasure was buried—November 2, 1876."

"Say, how did you find out that treasure was buried somewhere along here?"

"That need not worry you, Senor Dick," grinned the Mexican. "I shall say this much, that I learned about it when Senor Marven got the coin."

"If he had the coin why didn't he get the treasure?"

"He could not read the directions on the coin."

"Why couldn't he?"

The Mexican shrugged his shoulders and lighted a cigarette.

"Well, you seemed to have no trouble reading it."

"I had the key in my mind. I never forgot that."

"Then you're lucky. If we find this treasure do we divide even?"

"Not so since I am the man who finds it. You shall be satisfied with one-third."

"How much will that amount to?"

"About \$30,000."

"All right. That suits me. I can live in clover on that for a long time."

"Come," said Guerrero, rising from the stool on which he had been sitting. "We will go up on the bluff and get the bearings of the treasure."

Dick Swivel was perfectly willing to do that, so after inspecting their prisoners' bonds to make sure they were all right the two rascals left the hut.

CHAPTER XV.

JACK'S FORTUNE.

Left by themselves in the hut, the door of which the rascals took the precaution to secure on the outside, Jack and Dora looked at each other.

Both realized that they were in a tight fix from which they did not see how they could extricate themselves.

Jack, however, was not a boy to give up without a big struggle.

The first thing he did as soon as the Mexican and Swivel had left the hut was to make an attempt to free himself from his bonds.

In this he was not very successful, as the rascals had tied him pretty securely.

Just as Jack was beginning to feel discouraged one of the cords gave enough for him to slip his right hand out of the loop that held it.

He quickly tore the gag from his mouth.

He got his knife out of his pocket and cut the rest of the cords in short order.

Rushing to where the girl was secured he first relieved her of the gag and then released her from the post.

At that moment Jack's sharp ears heard the voices of the two rascals outside.

"What are we going to do?" asked Dora, grasping Jack by the arm. "They'll tie us up again as soon as they find we are free."

"Are you game to help me make a break for liberty?" asked the boy.

"Yes. Anything rather than remain a prisoner here any longer."

"All right. Here, take this piece of wood. It's as good as a club. I'll take this one. You stand on one side of the door, I'll stand on the other. The moment they enter I'll hit the first one and you strike at the other. I'll back you up if your aim isn't good. It will take a little nerve on your part, but it is our only show to escape."

"I'll do my part," replied Dora resolutely.

Jack blew out the lantern light and they took their places on either side of the door as they heard one of the men on the outside unfastening it.

A minute later the door opened and in walked the Mexican first.

Whack!

Jack felled him to the ground with a heavy blow.

Dick Swivel was close behind him, and before he could recover from his surprise at Guerrero's fall Dora's stick caught him alongside the head and he went down, too.

Her blow was not very effective, and Jack had to hand him one to keep him quiet.

"Get the rope that was used to tie us, Dora, so we can make these chaps prisoners."

She brought it, and Jack speedily tied Swivel hand and foot.

He fixed the Mexican the same way, and relieved him of the copper coin which he found in his pocket.

He relighted the lantern, and taking it in his hand called Dora to follow him.

He was satisfied the crooks would not be able to escape from the hut, and he intended to have the police of Willowdale notified at once of their whereabouts.

With the aid of the lantern light Jack and Dora soon made their way to the top of the bluff.

Jack flashed the lantern around the rear of the house to see what the crooks had been up to with respect to the treasure.

He found that they had discovered the compass and shovel he had brought out there that afternoon, that they had located a spot about twelve feet from the house, and in line with the old walnut tree, and that they had done considerable digging.

They had left the shovel sticking in the hole, intending to return after visiting the hut, maybe, for the lantern.

The sight of the hole, dug to the depth of about three feet, fired Jack's anticipations of the treasure.

He determined to stay there and finish the job, sending Dora to the Gables.

"Dora, you don't mind returning to the house alone, do you?" he said.

"No; but what are you going to do here?"

"I'm going to finish the digging for that treasure."

"Can't you do that to-morrow in the daylight?"

"I'm afraid to take any chances now that those men have begun the job. They might possibly manage to free themselves while we were both at the house waiting for the police to come over after them. In that case they'd be sure to come here, finish the work and skip with the money. Now, I want you to hurry to the house, tell your uncle how matters stand, and he'll send William to town for a force of officers. Then you and Mr. Warden had better come over here right away with revolvers, and thus we'll make sure of those rascals."

Dora set off at once, and Jack, putting down the lantern, commenced working in the hole where the treasure was supposed to be.

In half an hour his shovel struck an obstruction.

He flashed the lantern into the hole and saw that he had struck a small brass-bound box.

"I've reached the treasure sure!" he cried gleefully. "Now all I've got to do is to land it on the surface."

Unaware that there was trouble brewing for him close by, Jack jumped into the hole again to put in the finishing strokes of his work.

While he had been absorbed with his treasure digging Dick Swivel had managed to free himself in the hut at the foot of the bluff.

He quickly released the Mexican, who had recovered his senses, and the two, satisfied that the police would soon be after them, started for the top of the bluff to finish digging for the treasure so that they could make off with it.

To their surprise when they reached the scene of operations they saw Jack Gardiner at work in the hole.

"Caramba!" cried Guerrero. "He has found the treasure."

"So much the better," replied Swivel. "He has saved us a lot of time and trouble. Don't you see he is alone? All we have to do is to capture him. This old tablecloth I brought to wrap the money in will do to smother him in till we can make off with the treasure."

As Jack, after great exertion, landed the heavy brass-bound box on the surface, the two crooks, who had been furtively watching him at work, sprang forward, the one in advance enveloping the boy in the folds of the tablecloth.

Their triumph, however, was but short-lived.

At that moment Mr. Warden, a neighbor, and Dora, armed with two revolvers, appeared suddenly on the scene.

The two rascals found themselves covered by the weapons, and being called upon to surrender, did so with very bad grace.

Jack released himself from the tablecloth and took a hand in securing them.

The party then gathered about the brass-bound box and looked at it with great interest.

Jack briefly sketched the history of his strange legacy for the benefit of Mr. Warden and his neighbor, and both congratulated him on finding what promised to be his fortune.

By the time he had concluded William appeared with three policemen from town.

They took charge of Guerrero and Dick Swivel and marched them over to the house, followed by the rest of the party, Jack and William carrying the treasure box between them.

The crooks were carried off in the wagon to Willowdale, while Mr. Warden, his neighbor, Jack and Dora sat down to the belated supper.

After the meal the treasure box was opened in the library and found to contain \$100,000 in American bills and \$10,000 in English gold.

Then Jack was congratulated once more, and he turned the money over to Mr. Warden, who had been appointed his legal guardian, to keep for him.

Three weeks later Guerrero, Cutcliffe and Dick Swivel were tried, convicted and sent to State prison for twenty years each, and Jack was satisfied that he had nothing more to fear from them, the Mexican particularly.

After that time passed pleasantly enough with Jack.

He had made himself solid with Matthew Warden and Dora Davenport, and the future looked rosy-hued, with one solitary exception—the fact that his father was in jail for life on the charge of murder and robbery.

One year from the time he came to live at Red Gables the old house on the bluff was torn down and ground broken for the erection of a fine summer hotel, which was to be built with a part of Jack's money.

While the building was going up a letter reached Willowdale, and was forwarded to Red Gables, addressed to Jack.

It was from Jack's father, the first he had ever received from him, and it proved a joyful surprise.

Mr. Gardiner was a free man.

The governor of the State had pardoned him because the real murderer and robber confessed on his dying bed and thus cleared the innocent victim of his crime.

Jack at once sent for his father, with Mr. Warden's acquiescence, to come to Red Gables, and thus father and son were reunited.

When the hotel was finished Jack put it in charge of his father to run for him, giving him a half interest in it.

The enterprise was a great success, thus proving the farsightedness of our hero.

A few years later Jack built a second hotel further along the bluff.

The summer he put it in commission he and Dora Davenport were married.

They continued to live at Red Gables, which would revert to Dora at her uncle's death, but they both hoped that would not take place for a long time.

Jack was now both happy and prosperous, and he maintained that this was chiefly due to the fortune he had received through the strangest legacy in the world.

Next week's issue will contain "TAKING CHANCES; OR, PLAYING FOR BIG STAKES."

Send Postal for Our Free Catalogue.

HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

WHAT WE FIGHT.

"The war was begun by the military masters of Germany, who proved to be also the masters of Austria-Hungary. These men have never regarded nations as peoples, men, women and children of like blood and frame as themselves, for whom governments existed and in whom governments had their life. They have regarded them merely as serviceable organizations which they could by force or intrigue bend or corrupt to their own purpose. They have regarded the smaller States, in particular, and the peoples who could be overwhelmed by force, as their natural tools and instruments of domination. Their purpose has long been avowed.

"If they succeed they are safe, and Germany and the world are undone; if they fail, Germany is saved and the world will be at peace. If they succeed, America will fall within the menace. We and all the rest of the world must remain armed, as they will remain, and must make ready for the next step in their aggression; if they fail, the world may unite for peace, and Germany may be of the union."

—WOODROW WILSON, President of the U. S.

WE MUST FINISH THE WORK.

"With the first installment of the Liberty Loan completed, immensely gratifying as is the result, we must remember that the financing of a great war is never completed until the war is finished; and we are going to finish this war to our satisfaction in order that America may not be finished. We must stay on job and do it in true American fashion. We have proved ourselves on the first test; we must be prepared for the second, the third, and the fourth if need be.

"This war must be fought to a finish. It must be so fought, because there is an irrepressible conflict between two irreconcilable principles and systems of organized society that never will be settled until it is fought to a finish. The world can no longer survive half democratic and half autocratic. One or the other must triumph. We are confronted to-day with an analogous situation to that which confronted this nation in 1861, when the immortal Lincoln said, 'This nation can no longer endure half slave and half free.' We had to fight that irreconcilable issue to a conclusion, and we fought it to a right conclusion. We vindicated freedom in America; we obliterated slavery from the free soil of this great nation. That is what we have got to do for the entire world—destroy despotism, which

is another form of slavery, and make liberty supreme. In no other way can the world be made safe for democracy. It is a noble deal; it is the only kind of an ideal for which a great republic like ours, a republic of freemen, could or would fight."—William G. McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury.

HOW ENGLAND SAVED

In strong contrast to their neighbors, the French across the English Channel, the masses of the English people a few years ago were proverbially a spendthrift rather than a saving race. But the great war has wrought a change.

In the year 1916 although purchasing billions of dollars of war bonds the small savings banks depositors in England increased their deposits over sixty million dollars.

It was patriotism that started this great change in the people of the nation. The English people started saving their money because they saw that it meant saving England. But thrift and economy begot thrift and economy. They economized and saved for their own sake as well as for England's sake. Not only did they save money, but they economized in food, in fuel, in dress, in luxuries. More than one million English workers were purchasers, out of their savings, in the second great war loan of Great Britain, and eight million subscribed to their last war loan.

The question whether the civilian population should economize and do without certain things or the soldiers and sailors be denied things necessary for their effectiveness and safety was answered in no uncertain or unpatriotic way by the masses of the English people. They did their bit in financing their country.

Neither in ability nor in patriotism are the American people second to the English or the French or the German or any other nation. The Liberty Loan is at once an appeal and a pride. It appeals to their patriotism and their civic pride; it is an opportunity to save and an opportunity to serve their country.

No American need fear that the results of the American people's support of the Liberty Loan will fail to maintain America's traditional patriotism and power. The more than four million subscribers and the more than a billion over-subscription to the first issue of the Liberty Loan Bonds are eloquent testimony of the American people's loyalty to their Government and their willingness and ability to give it full financial support.

OUT FOR EVERYTHING

OR

THE BOY WHO TOOK CHANCES

By **GASTON GARNE**

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XXV (continued)

"I hear," growled Gorriigan.

"Then you'd better scott—quick!"

"What for?" demanded the ex-thief, gruffly.

"So you wont get in jail again."

"That's a mighty poor reason," retorted Gorriigan, coolly. "I came out of jail with you, Mr. Warren. I'll go back with you if so be you are headed that way instead of up in the sky."

"Boy," warned the spokesman for the officers, "we've got through talking with you."

"Glad to hear it," spoke Warren, delightedly. "Go home to supper."

"If you refuse to obey our orders we shall be compelled to shoot."

"Then shoot away," replied Ned.

Taking the cigar from between his lips he held it just over the powder, and less than a foot away. "If you hit when you shoot I reckon this cigar'll just about land in the powder."

One of the policemen turned tail and beat a hasty retreat, not stopping until he had gone more than a hundred feet.

"One down," mocked Ned. "Can either of you others shoot straight?"

"You've got 'em going," commented the ex-thief, dryly.

"Gorriigan, haven't you gone yet?" remanded the boy, half-angrily.

"Not a bit of it. I'm lighting my pipe."

"What for?"

"To give you a spell of rest when your cigar burns too short."

The drawing sounds behind him, in connection with the smell of the burning of another grade of tobacco, convinced our hero while he kept his eyes on the officers before him.

The boldest of the three cocked his revolver with a noisy click.

Raising the weapon, he took slow aim.

"Good luck to your aim," smiled Ned, as he again held the lighted cigar recklessly close to the powder.

Then, slowly, and with wonderfully steady hand, he moved the glowing coals of tobacco an inch, and yet another inch, closer to the shining black grains in which were locked up the powers of life and death.

It was too much for the nerve of the officers.

They retreated, not halting until they had put a good three hundred feet between themselves and this insanely dare-devil boy.

"They're getting a whole lot more sensible, ain't they?" laughed the boy.

"That they are," assented Mr. Gorriigan, calmly, as he drew steadily through his pipe-stem.

"Now, what does that mean?" muttered Ned, with sudden uneasiness.

For, while two of the officers remained stationary at a safe distance, the third was hurrying off in the direction of Weston.

"As there ain't any boats around here—" hinted Gorriigan, removing the pipe from his mouth.

"I guess it's plain enough that they're going to use the telephone across the river to brother officers," groaned Ned. "I was hoping they wouldn't think of that! Gorriigan, did you see where the coupe went?"

"It went over into the next village, sir, and then out of sight down a street."

"If Kirk has got through safely I don't care for the rest," murmured the boy to himself. "But I wish Gorriigan hadn't been such a fool as to insist on running into this scrape with me."

The cigar burned so low at last that Ned could no longer hold it in his fingers.

Reluctantly he threw it away, and with equal reluctance he allowed Gorriigan to mount guard with busily puffing pipe.

Still two of the officers remained on guard at the distance.

And at last their absent comrade came back to them and whispered.

After that these men of the law stood silently watching the man and the boy on the truck.

The afternoon sun was going low.

"I wonder how Kirk got along," murmured the boy, uneasily.

Since Gorriigan was keeping vigilant guard, Warren looked around him from time to time.

And now suddenly our hero caught sight of a group that filled him with a new terror.

Four men were approaching from the further side of the river.

Long before they reached the bridge Ned recognized one of them.

"Kirk!" throbbed our hero in anguish. "And he's

carrying his hands behind him. Can it be that he's hand-cuffed? Caught? Nabbed?"

Fascinated, Ned Warren watched until his eyes ached from the intensity of that gaze.

Still with his hands behind him, Kirk came onward, two of his companions walking on either side and the third just behind.

"How white his face is, poor fellow!" quivered Ned, who had ceased to wonder what would become of himself.

In fact, Ned Warren no longer realized much except that he had not won out—that he had failed Grace Fulham when he had promised success.

It was the same as the end of life for the boy.

He no longer cared what happened.

"Well?" he hailed, sharply, as Kirk trod nearer to the truck.

"Sommers is dead!" came the response from the pallid-faced captive.

CHAPTER XXVI.

STEPPING ON A HUMAN SNAKE.

"Scoot, Gorriigan! Dive into the river, and get away, if you can. It's all up!" quivered Ned.

"I'll dive if you do!" muttered the ex-thief.

"No; I don't care what becomes of me now."

"Then no more do I care what becomes of me," replied the man, glumly.

Dully, Ned Warren leaped down to the roadway of the bridge.

Gorriigan followed without taking time for thought.

Seeing this, the Weston officers darted forward.

"So the last hope is gone?" quivered Ned, staring into the eyes of Kirk, who was now almost at arm's length.

"Hope gone?" Kirk echoed, his eyes glittering with a queer light. "Not wholly, Warren. Before he died, Sommers confessed. My friend, Bowles, back there, has the dead scoundrel's confession, signed, sealed and delivered."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Ned, in three different tones of joy.

"Boy, you are our prisoner!" cried one of the Weston officers, clapping a hand on Warren's shoulder.

"You here?" cried Ned, turning impatiently. "Go away and read, can't you? I want to hear what my friend has to say."

"One moment, officers," cried the man who had been behind Kirk, now stepping forward. "You know me. I am Lawyer Bowles. I am able to assure you that there has been a great mistake. I represent Mr. Kirk, and I hold witnessed proof that he is innocent of the crime for which he was sent to prison."

"That has nothing to do with the case of this boy," growled the spokesman of the Weston police. "He and this pig-headed driver here held up and hindered us in the discharge of our duty. It's prison

for them both, no matter what you can do for your own client, Mr. Bowles."

"My own client is a prisoner, but he won't be long," responded the lawyer, smilingly. "Gentlemen, your telephone message across the river did its work, but not in time to prevent Edward Kirk from establishing his innocence."

The two officers from beyond now turned Kirk over into the custody of the Weston officers.

Lawyer Bowles accompanied the three prisoners to the Weston lock-up.

But Ned went happily.

"I am satisfied now, Mr. Kirk," whispered the boy. "You can clear yourself, and that means that I've won out."

"You may have won out for me, but you are in sad trouble for yourself," sighed Kirk, gazing at the boy with pained affection. "Warren, I can't tell you how sorry I am. I regret, at last, that I didn't remain patiently behind the bars down in Texas."

"Not by a long shot you don't regret it," throbbed Ned. "If you had stayed there you couldn't have taken the stain off your name. Grace and her mother would still be dreading the exposure. Now they can face the world, and you can stand beside them."

"But you, Ned Warren! You——"

Edward Kirk could go no further, but broke down sobbingly.

"Oh, as for me," returned Ned, blithely, "I know that I haven't done anything wicked or dishonorable. I can take my medicine, and I'm so young that I shall be out of jail in time to have much of life left before me!"

Yet our hero's heart sank, in spite of his pretended cheerfulness.

He knew well enough that his plight shut him out of Grace Fulham's life.

Even though he went behind the bars in her service, he realized quite plainly that he could never offer her his love on his release from prison.

He could not link her name to one that had been tainted by a prison record.

"Even if Grace would have it I wouldn't," he quivered, feeling inside of him as if he were sinking through the earth.

This conversation had taken place in the guard-room of the little police station.

They—Kirk, Warren and Gorriigan—had not been placed in cells as yet, for Lawyer Bowles, with all the energy of a staunch friend, was hustling to secure bail for them.

He had telephoned to Mr. Fulham, who, with his wife and daughter, was now on the way to Weston in a fast automobile.

They arrived before long, Chug Bailey driving the hired machine.

But even when Mr. Fulham arrived, prepared to offer any amount of bonds that any sane judge could demand, there were complications.

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

Girl bathers on the beaches at Washington and Berkeley Lake Parks, Denver, Col., have devised a painless tattoo system for displaying the initials of their favorite suitors, who have answered the country's call for war. On their dimpled arms they have applied the initial cut out in court-plaster. The action of the sun in tattooing their shapely arms leaves the initial imprinted strikingly.

The Quartermaster Corps has completed plans for the construction of two central supply depots for the army, one at Harrisburg, Pa., and the other near Richmond, Va. The structures will cost about \$400,000 each. The depot at Harrisburg will be upon the site of Camp Meade, which was used in the Spanish-American War. This will be used as a distributing point for aircraft, wireless apparatus and lighter ordnance.

Senator Smoot, a member of the Finance Committee of the Senate, has stated that the cost to this country of the war, in actual expenditures will reach the stupendous figure of \$17,000,000,000 for the first twelve months. The army estimates are based upon the organization, equipment and sustenance of an army of 2,000,000 men. This includes the regular army, 387,000; National Guard, 400,000; National army, 500,000; auxiliaries, 100,000, and the second quota of drafted forces.

Camps for mountain climbers in Vermont have to be made porcupine-proof, as well as fireproof, for the Canadian species of the sharp-haired rodent (*Eethizon dorsatus*) strays across the border in search of tender birch-bark, and is often found rustinating in modern camps in Northern New England. It is because of the prevalence of these curious animal on the heights of the Green Mountains that the camp recently established on Killington Peak, in the town of Sherburne, and the second highest mountain in Vermont, has been constructed of galvanized iron.

Official information received in Washington is to the effect that the entrance of the United States into the war has caused great changes in the German plans for her submarine campaign. After furnishing Austria with a sufficient number of submarines for that nation's needs, Germany has withdrawn entirely from the Mediterranean and is concentrating every effort upon the one object of stopping British, French and American troops and supply ships in the Atlantic or North Sea. A diminished number of submarines, of German build, but manned entirely by Austrians, are in service in the Adriatic and Mediterranean, but their offensive opera-

tions have been greatly curtailed. Italy maintains large fleets of submarine chasers and holds this weapon to be only inferior to destroyers and airplanes in combating submarines.

Vast amounts of North American capital have engaged in the meat trade for many years, and it is significant that most of these great financial firms and groups have now obtained a strong hold on the industry in Argentina, and it is further significant that similarly they are at work in organizing new factories and breeding establishments in Brazil and Uruguay, while intelligently inquiring into the pastoral resources of Venezuela and Central America. In Brazil, as an instance of this, it is stated that the Armour Packing Company has just established a plant at Santa Anna do Livramento, in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, the erection of which is now proceeding. They are also establishing a factory in the neighborhood of Sao Paulo. It is said that both these establishments will be very substantially built and equipped on the most modern lines, provision being made for the considerable future development which Armour's anticipates with confidence. The capital investment involved by these two enterprises is over one million sterling. Thus it may be assumed that the crafty Yankee cattle expert foresees an early transfer of his business to the South American sphere.

A huge raft of Oregon pine logs, 600 feet long and 52 feet wide, was towed 1,000 miles from an interior point on the Columbia river in Oregon, via the Pacific Ocean, to San Diego, Cal., where it is converted into lumber for the use of the United States Army and for shipbuilding purposes. The lumber is distributed throughout the Southwest. These rafts are floated down the Pacific during the months of July, August and September, when the ocean is as placid as a mill pond. Each raft contains from four million to six million feet of lumber; the logs are from 80 to 100 feet in length and measure as much as four feet in diameter. The raft draws 24 feet of water and stands 12 feet above the surface. It is held together by 64 chains of tested steel links, which are wrapped round its circumference. Longitudinally it contains an immense chain of links, measuring 2 1-4 miles. The latter is the tow chain by which the enormous raft, as long as three city blocks, is dragged through the ocean to its destination, by a sturdy but insignificant ocean-going tug. Over 200 tons of iron are used in the chains that hold these rafts together. Lumber is in great demand and the supply has to be unusually large. The West is perhaps the greatest lumber field in the United States.

THE CAVE OF GOLD

—OR—

THE BOY MINERS OF THE ROCKIES

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER III.

THE THREE BECOME PARTNERS.

The two eyed Sam thoughtfully.

The youth seemed to know what was in their minds, and he laughed and said:

"You wonder why I left the circus, and what I am doing up here in this wild region, I suppose?"

The other two nodded assent.

Sam Sloan gave the two a quick, searching glance and then said:

"Well, I don't mind telling, for you look like honest chaps. Wait a moment and I'll show you something."

He drew a notebook from his pocket, opened it and drew forth a clipping. Unfolding it, he held it up so the two could see the heading, which was one familiar to them already, for it was

"A CAVE OF GOLD!"

Bob and George exchanged glances and burst into laughter.

It seemed funny to them that this young fellow should be up here on the same errand as they themselves were on.

Sam Sloan regarded them in some surprise.

"Why the laughter?" he queried.

"You'll soon know," and they drew forth the clippings and held them up in front of the youth.

He stared a few moment, then grinned broadly, then burst into loud laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared. "I see! I understand. You two chaps are up here to search for the cave of gold, the same as I am! Well, well! Say, this does just beat the band, doesn't it!"

"It certainly does!" agreed Bob.

"And that's no error," from George.

"It's funny that we should meet up here in this fashion, sure enough," said Sam.

"It certainly is rather strange," said Bob.

"Say, I'm glad that I bumped up against you two chaps," said Sam. "I tell you it is lonesome business tramping the mountains all alone! I suggest that we join our fortunes and become partners in the search for the cave of gold. What do you say?"

"I'm willing," said Bob.

"And I," from George. "Bob and I had just decided to stick together—we had never seen each other until about half an hour ago."

"Is that so? Well, I'm glad you fellows are willing. By the way, I don't know your names."

"Mine is Bob Baker."

"Glad to know you, Bob Baker. Shake," extending his hand.

The two shook hands.

"And my name is George Glenn," said the other youth.

"Glad to know you, George Glenn," and the two shook hands.

"How came you to fall, Sam?" asked Bob.

"Why, I saw you two fellows down here and was coming down to join you, when I stepped on a rock, which gave way, throwing me down, and then I came rolling over and over and was unable to stop or get to my feet."

"What were you doing up there off the trail?" queried George.

"I got lost. That's the reason I was so glad to see you fellows and so eager to join you."

"Oh, that was it, eh?"

"Yes. And, now, where are we, anyway?"

"About five miles from Wisdom camp."

"That's the place I was trying to reach."

"Same here," from George.

"And we will go right on," said Bob. "We can get there in two hours easily enough."

"But it won't do me any good to get there," said Sam. "I haven't any money to buy food with or lodgings."

"Well, I have only a little more than a dollar myself," from Bob.

"And the sum total of my wealth is two dollars and ten cents," said George.

"Say, we're strong on the sinews of war, I don't think!" said Sam.

"Wait till we find the cave of gold!" grinned George.

"I'm afraid we'll have to wait," smiled Bob.

"That's where the trouble comes in," said Sam. "But say, what are we to do, anyway? We will have to get hold of some money somehow?"

"But how? That's the question," said George.

Sam's eyes happened to fall upon the violin case. "Whose is that?" he queried, pointing.

"Mine," from Bob.

"You play, of course; else you wouldn't be carrying the box around."

"Yes, a little. In fact, I am a crack about playing. It seems that I just have to play some every day or else I am miserable. So when I set out for this region to search for the cave of gold, I brought my violin along—though it must look silly to any one else."

"Glad you brought it," said Sam. "We will make it bring in some shekels when we get to the mining camp."

"You mean that I will play for money?"

"Sure—in the saloons. Play a piece or two and then pass around the hat—see?"

Bob nodded.

"We may be able to pick up some money that way," he agreed.

"And then I'll amuse the gang with acrobatic stunts. I'm pretty clever, if I do say it myself. I can do some pretty and difficult feats with my feet, and that's the truth. I can do the flip-flap from one foot, lighting on one foot, and that's about as hard a stunt as you can scare up."

"Say, that will be all right!" said George. "Wish I could do something."

"You can; you can pass the hat around."

"That's so. All right; I'll do it, and I'll make 'em ante up, or tell 'em what I think of them."

"And when we get enough money, we'll buy some picks and shovels and pretend that we are going up the mountains to prospect, and to mine, if we find pay dirt; and we will put in our time looking for the cave of gold!"

"Right you are, Sam!" said George.

They talked a while longer, discussing their plans, and then Sam said:

"Now that we have everything settled, I suggest that we give three cheers for The Boy Miners of the Rockies."

"All right," said the other two in unison, and then they swung their hats and gave the cheers.

"Now let's hike," said Bob.

"Lead on, Bob, old chap," said Sam. "We will be right at your heels."

Then the three youths so strangely thrown together set out up the trail, talking and laughing in a manner that would have led a listener to believe they had known one another a life-time, instead of but little more than an hour.

CHAPTER IV.

A CLEVER ACROBATIC FEAT.

"I see lights!"

"So do I."

"Yes, that must be the camp!"

The three youths stood on the top of a ridge and were looking down into a valley.

Lights were twinkling in the distance, and there could be little doubt that they shone from the windows of the buildings that constituted Wisdom mining camp.

"There's where we'll eat," said Sam.

"Perhaps," said Bob, significantly.

"Oh, we'll give a musical programme and an acrobatic performance at the first saloon we strike," said Sam; "and I'll wager that we gather in more than enough coin of the realm to buy our suppers with."

"We'll try it, anyhow," said Bob.

"Come on," said George.

They set out down the slope, and twenty minutes later they entered the camp.

So far as they could make out, there were perhaps one hundred buildings in the camp; the majority being one-story shanties, perhaps twelve feet wide by thirty in length. But there were some that were two stories in height, and that were twenty-five to forty feet in width by one hundred in depth. These were the saloons, "hotels" and dance halls.

"Let's go in here," said Sam, pausing in front of one of the larger buildings. On the front were the words:

"THE PALACE HOTEL"

"The name sounds good," said George.

"Yes, but a palace here and in a city are vastly different propositions," said Sam.

"A fellow will likely have to bring his imagination into play to make a palace out of this place," said Bob.

They entered and looked about them. They were in a room forty feet wide by fifty feet deep, and along one side ran a bar, behind which, on shelves, were bottles and jugs of liquor. Four bartenders were waiting on the thirsty customers, of whom there were perhaps thirty present.

On the other side of the room were some tables, around which men were gathered, evidently gambling.

When the three youths entered, the inmates of the room looked at them with interest and with some showing of amazement. A few showed signs of being amused, too, for they grinned broadly. Doubtless this was because of the youthfulness of the three, and the fact that they were dressed in "store clothes," instead of the rough attire of miners.

"Hello! look at ther kiddies!" cried one rough, bearded fellow.

"Wonder whar they dropped frum?" from another.

"They air shore three uv er kin'," said a third.

"Wonder does theer mothers know they are out?" snickered a fourth.

Then they all laughed, after which the first speaker beckoned with his forefinger and said:

"Come up an' hev er drink, younkers. Et's my treat."

(To be continued.)

NEWS OF THE DAY

FINGERPRINTS 1,000 YEARS AGO.

According to B. Laufer of the Field Museum, Chicago, the taking of fingerprints as a means of identification was used by the Chinese and Japanese at least a thousand years ago. Writing in *Science* to controvert Sir William J. Herschel's claim to the credit for the invention, he quotes Rashid-eddin, the famous Persian historian, who described in 1303 the then ancient Chinese custom; Soleiman, an Arabian merchant, who wrote in A. D. 851 that in China creditors' bills were marked by the debtor with his fingers; and three contracts dated A. D. 782 and 786, both finger marked and bearing a note to the effect that the parties thereto had affixed the impressions of their fingers.

BOY OF 14 FIGHTS BULL.

Spain, land of torreadors, should hear of Albert Hosmer, fourteen, of Parkman, Ohio.

As a bull fighter Hosmer has just made a record, without weapons.

A bull owned by the boy's father charged Albert as he sought to feed the animal an apple. He grasped the bell ring of the maddened animal and leaped squarely on the bull's back. Roaring and snorting, the bull ran wildly around the lot. Then the animal stopped suddenly, and Albert was hurled to the ground.

Albert ran his fingers into the bull's nostrils and gripped tight. The bull fell to its knees. The boy let go, dashed to the fence and was on the other side before the bull charged.

NOVEL BALL PARK OPENING.

A huge plaster of Paris baseball, filled with sparkling liquid, took the place of a bottle of champagne, and a model of an ocean liner served in place of a real boat, in a most unusual christening which marked the recent opening of a ball park, laid out for teams representing large shipbuilding firms at Seattle, says the August *Popular Mechanics Magazine*. The ball park was placed on the home plate and the ship concealed behind a flag on top of the grandstand. When the flag was unfurled, revealing the ship, the latter was released from its support and began to slide down a wire which extended to the home plate. As the ship neared the ground it struck the big ball and broke it, spilling its contents on the diamond, which was thereupon turned over to the players representing the shipbuilding concern.

THE VALUE OF RIFLE SHOOTING.

The Army and Navy Gazette of London, commenting on the great value of good rifle shooting in

the present war says: "Happily the military authorities have not been misled by the results achieved by the big guns, the bombs, and the various missile-throwing trench weapons into imagining that the infantry soldier has ceased, or was likely to cease, to be primarily a rifleman, and the good work which was initiated before the war at Hythe and at Bisley, and at regimental rifle meetings, has been continued and expanded at the many musketry schools which have been established behind the front in France, where selected officers and men of our forces have been taught all that was to be got out of the service weapon. The result has been shown in the account we hear of the wonderful rifle practise made by our troops in the fighting around Bullecourt, reminding us of the stories that used to reach us during the retreat from Mons of how German mass attacks withered up under the fire of our infantry of the old army."

FEEDING STARVING DEER.

The deep snow on the divides between the rivers of Idaho sometimes attain to the height of thirteen or fourteen feet on top of the divides, thus driving all game, and especially the deer, to the lower regions, causing them to trample the snow in certain paths, or in places where these deer can obtain moss, grass or the branches of trees. During the winter and spring just passed the snow was extremely deep, and as it attained a greater depth the innocent animals were compelled to come nearer and nearer the rivers and civilization.

It so happened that a rich sawmill man who had befriended them, fed a few of them some hay, writes John Chambers in *Our Dumb Animals*. Word seemed to spread among them that here was protection and feed. A rancher, in cutting some wood, observed some deer within a few rods of him eating the boughs and buds of the tree on which he was working. On trying to scare one he observed that it was in a starved condition. He allowed it to eat with his cattle, but as others came he was obliged to protect his stock by giving them the hay he had harvested for them. However, he aroused the sympathy of the townspeople of St. Maries and soon loads of alfalfa were being sent to relieve the deer from starvation. Men were posted to keep the dogs and marauders from killing and disturbing them. In a district containing about twenty-four to thirty square miles, it was estimated that there were from two hundred to three hundred deer. As the game is fast disappearing in this country this is written in hopes that some Eastern lawmakers may have the true light and, if the time ever comes that they may assist in protecting game, they will do so without a feeling of fear from the Western people.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

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Good Current News Articles

When in 1842 the United States troops finally came off victorious in their bloody seven-years' war with the Seminoles, a portion of the tribe eluded capture and fled to the fastnesses of the Florida everglades, where they remained until the trouble had been partly forgotten by the whites. It is this remnant of the Seminole nation whose members now act as venders of souvenirs at Palm Beach.

In St. Moritz, six thousand feet up among the Alps, everybody wears a sweater. Skating, ski-ing, coasting, if you are not clad in a white sweater your dress is incorrect. The prettiest, quaintest thing there is the way all the dogs wear sweaters, too. A sweater is just the thing for a dog. Fitting tight, leaving the legs free, outlining the graceful body, it is at once comfortable and becoming. And in St. Morit all the dogs wear sweaters. Bulldogs, dachshunds, collies, fox terriers, each capers about in the snow in a white sweater.

Something unique in the way of animal kindness, which also will net profits to the owner, has been discovered, north of Pierre, S. D., at the Pitlick ranch. An old mother cat has very charitably "adopted" and is raising a litter of skunks, and this gave the boys an idea, with the result that they search for the baby skunks, and bring them to the old kitty to raise, and she seems not to think them at all strange, but gives them every attention she would kittens of her own. The young skunks will be raised for their pelts, which bring a good price on the market.

With Norway building 3,000-ton ships of reinforced concrete, the proposal recently made to build ships of cast steel demands more than an ironical rejection. Recent improvements in metallurgy have left their mark upon the manufacture of cast steel, which to-day, because of its increased toughness and higher tensile strength, is being used for many

purposes for which a few decades ago it would have been considered an impossible material. We do not say that the thing can be done; but the study of the problem which is now being made is decidedly of interest. It is proposed to build the ships in sections and to weld the sections together electrically. Each section, whether for the bottom or the sides, would be cast with such ribs and other stiffening members as would be necessary. The sections are to be eight or ten feet in length, measured on the longitudinal axis of the ship. It is proposed to have on such section for the bottom and two others for the sides, a fourth section forming the deck frame-work. The designer believes that by the use of manganese supplied through the soldering the resulting electrically-welded joint would have 125 per cent. of the strength of the casting itself. It is also proposed to erect blast furnaces and open-hearth furnaces at the shipyards, and it is estimated that more tonnage could be turned out per month than by the ordinary methods.

Grins and Chuckles

"Did you have a good time at the Sunday school picnic, Jimmie?" "Betcher life I did. I fell in the lemonade barrel, and after that nobody wanted to drink any except me."

"Laziness is the beginning of trouble," remarked Bill's wife. "Yes," replied Bill. "I know that from experience. I used to loaf around your father's house before I married you."

"Ah, Madoline!" exclaimed the ardent swain, "your resplendent beauty sets my brain on fire!" "Never mind, Mr. Softleigh," said the fair one, soothingly, "I am sure it won't be much of a conflagration."

Mother—What's the little boy next door crying about? Tommie—Oh, he got hurt. Mother—He did, did he? You know I told you I'd punish you if you ever raised a hand to him. Tommie—Well, I didn't raise a hand to him, mother, I raised a foot.

The man and wife whose frequent quarrels had become a neighborhood scandal were severely reprimanded by the priest. "Why," said the priest, "the cat and dog that you have agree better than that." "May be," said Patrick, "but just tie them together and see what happens."

The newly-elected mayor of a small town was fond of show, so he did his best to be inducted into office in weather favorable to gay processions. At his suggestion this notice was put into the local papers three days before his installation: "On the occasion of the installation of the new mayor the fire brigade will be reviewed in the afternoon if it rains in the morning and in the morning if it rains in the afternoon."

THE LEFT-HANDED ASSASSIN.

By Horace Appleton

Rodney Ransom, at the age of twenty-seven, had left his home suddenly, and for twenty long years none of his friends or relatives heard aught of him.

One day in early summer a bronzed, weather-beaten man descended the gangplank of a European steamer, and engaging a hackman was driven to the Hotel.

As the cab was whirled along the street, the inmate kept glancing out of the windows on either side, and as he passed through a certain street he muttered:

"How many—many changes have taken place. Well, twenty years is a long while. That length of time ago I was poor, almost penniless; now, after a long residence in China, I am back rich almost as a king."

The cab sped along, and finally reached its destination.

The man alighted, paid the driver his fee, and entered the hotel, in whose books he registered himself as—Rodney Ransom.

"You are responsible for all that is left in your charge?" he inquired of the clerk.

"Yes."

"Well, here is a package which I will trust you with until I can remove it to safer quarters in the morning."

"Very well, sir," said the clerk, placing the package, which was closely sealed, in the big hotel safe. "Would you like to go to your room?"

"Yes."

A hallboy was called, who conducted Mr. Ransom to his room, whither his trunk had already been carried.

After washing and dressing, he consulted his massive gold watch, and found that it was near six o'clock, which determined him to wait for dinner before going out.

While waiting he sent for a city directory, and after poring over it a while, he took out pencil and paper and jotted down an address.

Dinner over, he engaged a cabman and was driven to the address he had jotted down, and found his expectations realized, when he found himself in contact with his own brother, who since his departure had married and had a family now gather about him.

After a long and pleasant stay Rodney Ransom arose to go.

"Won't you remain all night?" asked his brother. "No; I must go back to the hotel."

Soon after reaching the hotel he retired and slept soundly until he was roused by a rapping at his door.

He arose, made his toilet, and made his way to the dining-room.

After he had finished his breakfast, he went to

the cashier's desk, paid his bill, called for and received the little sealed package, and started for his room again.

It was the last time the poor fellow was ever seen alive, for an hour later some one entering his room found him stretched upon the floor lifeless.

Word was immediately sent to the Central Office, and the chief started me off for the spot at once.

I went to the hotel and was shown to the room. I examined the body, and found he had died from a wound inflicted with a loaded cane, and evidently wielded by a left-handed person.

I came into contact with the murdered man's brother, who, hearing of his murder, hastened to the hotel.

From him I learned of the visit the night before, and that his brother had incidentally spoken of a small package which contained many thousands of dollars' worth of diamonds.

I searched for this package, and found it missing.

I next visited the clerk, and learned that Mr. Ransom had paid his bill and received his package not an hour before his dead body was found.

I inquired of the clerk if any one had been around when he called for it.

At first the clerk could not remember of the presence of any one, and I began to despair; but finally it occurred to him that a Cuban, by the name of Gomez, had been standing not far from the desk at the time; and he further recollects that Gomez had suddenly disappeared, and he had not seen him since.

I determined to hunt this Gomez up, and started out with that intention.

I finally found him in a resort much frequented by persons of his nationality.

Pretending to be very drunk, I staggered up to the bar and called every one in the room up to have a drink with me.

Narrowly did I watch the way Gomez used his hands.

He called for whisky, and I was terribly disappointed to see him raise the decanter with his right hand.

I ordered cigars for the party.

In selecting one Gomez again used his left hand.

I staggered toward him, and with my apparently heavy, but really observant eyes, scanned every line of his body.

An unusual protrusion of one of his pockets attracted my attention, and I staggered against him, at the same time placing my hand, as if by accident, on the suspicious spot.

From its shape I knew it was a small package.

I was sure I had discovered my man, and throwing off my assumed drunkenness, I clapped my hand on his shoulder and declared him my prisoner.

In an instant all was excitement.

As for Gomez, he turned deathly pale, then broke out in loud protestations, and endeavored to break loose.

In this he was seconded by his friends, and some

one of them struck me a heavy blow on the head that stretched me on the floor in a partial state of insensibility.

When I had recovered, Gomez was not to be seen; he had fled.

I scoured the city for him, but could find naught of him.

In examining the books of a Havana steamer several days later, I found evidence, that despite the precautions I had taken, Gomez had taken passage in her.

I related the circumstances to the chief, and he left the case entirely in my hands.

After a talk with the brother of the murdered man, who offered me a very liberal reward in case I could bring the murderer to justice, I determined to pursue Gomez to Cuba, and trust to luck to bring him back with me.

Arrived at that place, I was busy but several days when I discovered a clue to the whereabouts of Gomez.

He was making his home with a certain testy old planter named De Laryo, about whom many dark things were almost if not quite openly stated.

Feeling sure of my disguise being such as could not be penetrated by Gomez, I made my way toward the De Laryo mansion, before reaching which, however, I was stopped by the overseer, who inquired what I wanted.

To his query I replied that I was a poor wanderer far from home, without money and without friends, and begged that he would give me food and shelter and something to do.

Being short of hands he acceded to my request, and I was put to work in the fields among a lot of well fed but brutally treated and almost naked negroes.

Being sent to the house one day, my flesh fairly crept as I saw a kennel of fierce-looking bloodhounds, of which I had heard the negroes speak.

I had been in the employ of De Laryo ten days, when I determined to make an attempt to carry off my prey.

I had learned the situation of Gomez' room; it was in the back part of the house, which I regarded as a particularly fortunate circumstance, as the huge bloodhounds were tethered in the front of the mansion.

I reached the window of Gomez' room and found it open; I peered in, but could see nothing, as all was darkness of the most intense character.

I listened long enough to satisfy myself that Gomez was sleeping, and then crawled cautiously into the room.

I chloroformed the villain.

His clothes were beside the bed.

I examined them, but could find nothing in them that I cared for. I next felt beneath his pillow, and to my joy my hand came in contact with a small, square package.

This I secured, and then lifting the slight form of the unconscious man, I made my way to the win-

dow; I laid him across the sill while I got outside, then drew him after me, got him upon my shoulders, and making a wide detour started for the shore, where I had hopes of finding a rowboat or some other small craft wherewith to convey my prisoner away from his friends.

About a quarter of the distance to the shore had been gone over, when I suddenly was confronted by the overseer, who demanded with an oath who and what I was.

I replied as best I could, and he not having discovered that I carried anything, I dropped Gomez to the ground behind me. I intended to do it gently, but failed, in so far that the unconscious man gave a deep groan.

With his suspicions excited, the overseer advanced, and finally, as he passed me, his foot struck the body.

Quick as a flash I sprang upon him, knocked the revolver from his grasp and brought down the butt-end of my own so forcibly upon his head that he sank to the earth unconscious.

Knowing that time was precious, I drew Gomez again upon my back, and started onward.

I had gone the greater portion of the distance from the mansion to the shore, when a sound broke upon my ear that seemed to freeze the very blood in my veins.

They had loosed the hellish bloodhounds.

Resolved not to give up my captive, I seized him, and endowed with this new strength, started on a run, despite the heavy burden I carried, toward the shore, on which even now I could hear the playing of the waves.

A few moments more and I entered the water, waded out to a little vessel, tumbled my prisoner into it, then climbed in myself.

Quickly I fastened the halliards and sprang to the tiller.

The sails fill, and the little vessel begins drawing away from the spot.

I tie the tiller, and am about to go forward to hoist the mainsail, when exhausted nature gives way, and I sink down unconscious.

When I came to myself, daylight had dawned, and carried onward by a stiff breeze, Cuba was but a low, black line on our horizon.

Gomez had not yet recovered consciousness, and taking time by the forelock, I bound him securely.

I had no compass, but thought I could strike Key West, and kept the prow of my craft in what I thought, and which proved to be, the proper direction.

I will pass over the tedious details of my sail to Key West and of my return to New York from there with my prisoner.

It is sufficient, I think, when I state that the package contained the diamonds which had been stolen from the murdered man; that the murder was most conclusively fixed upon Gomez, who acknowledged it before his death, which took place beneath the shadow of a gallows scarce a year later.

FACTS WORTH READING

A POUND OF HONEY.

When you eat a spoonful of honey, you have very little idea as to the amount of work and travel necessary to produce it. To make a pound of honey bees must take the nectar from 62,000 clover blossoms, and to do this requires 2,750,000 visits to the blossoms by the bees.

In other words, in order to collect enough nectar to make one pound of honey, a bee must go from hive to flower and back again 2,750,000 times. Then, when you think how far these bees sometimes fly in search of these clover fields, often one or two miles distant from the hive, you will begin to get a small idea of the number of miles one of the industrious little creatures must travel in order that you may have a pound of honey.

MAROONED TWO YEARS ON ISLE.

The Navy Department has made public the report of the American warship commander who rescued from Clippertown Island, in the Pacific, some time ago, three women and eight children who were the last remnants of a party of Mexicans who went to the island with Captain Ramon De Arnaud of the Mexican army to develop its guano deposits.

For military reasons the names of the American vessel and its commander were not made public. The commander's report shows that the women and children who were rescued had barely escaped starvation, while Captain De Arnaud lost his life at sea in the small boat in which he started out for help, and that other members of the party died of starvation and scurvy.

It was not until after the number of women and children left alive on the island had been reduced to the limits of the small supply of cocoanuts that the ravages of scurvy ceased. For more than two years these survivors were forced to subsist on the flesh and eggs of gannets and gulls, and occasionally fish.

The officers and crew of the warship raised a fund of \$200 for the relief of the refugees, who have been landed at a Mexican port.

STRANGE TREE BOWS ITS HEAD AT NIGHT.

From Simla, India, S. B. Banerjea sends the following to this magazine:

The educated public in Bengal is excited over the discovery of a palm tree which is exhibiting certain remarkable phenomena.

This tree is on a plot of land owned by an inhabitant of Faridpur. In the morning it stands erect, with its leaves outspread; but after sunset it bows its head, the leaves touching the ground, as if prostrating. This is witnessed every day.

Ignorant people have come to regard it as an abode of some god. Hundreds of men, women and children visit it daily and offer pujahs near it. It is even stated that many persons have been cured by offering pujah.

Sir Jagadish Nunder Bose, the renowned botanist, sent some of his assistants, with a self-recording apparatus specially constructed for the purpose, to discover the cause of the phenomenon. It has been found by dynamometric measurements that "the internal forces, whose periodic fluctuation causes this remarkable movement, are very great, the pull necessary to bring the tree down to its position of prostration exceeding several hundredweights."

Notwithstanding the thoroughly scientific explanation that this phenomenon is entirely natural, the owner of the tree is still making a good income from the pujah offerings of pilgrims.

OUR PATRIOTIC REBELS.

"During the first week in June the veterans who fought on the side of the South in the Civil War held their annual encampment in the city of Washington. This was the first time that the veterans of the Confederacy have come together in our capital city, which they tried so long and so hard to capture, and it was a remarkable and inspiring event. About 10,000 men wearing the gray, escorted by several thousand who wore the blue, marched along Pennsylvania avenue and were reviewed by the President," writes S. E. Forman in *St. Nicholas*. "In the line were many young soldiers now serving in the regular army, grandsons of those who fought for the Confederacy and of those who fought for the Union. The Stars and Bars of the Confederacy were proudly borne at the head of the procession, but by the side of the flags of the South waved the Stars and Stripes, the flag of a united country. As these flags were dipped in salute when passing the President, the banners fell together in a loving and friendly way. As the long line passed the reviewing-stand the old men in gray offered their services in the present war. 'We will go to France or anywhere you want to send us!' they shouted to the President. 'Call on us if the boys can't do it!' was a cry that was frequently heard. The spirit manifested by the veterans while in Washington showed plainly enough that there is no longer any bitterness in their hearts. 'We fought for four years to take this town,' said one of the old men, 'but now I thank God we did not get it.' Thus in many ways proof was given that the very men who fought against the Union in the Civil War are to-day its strongest supporters. 'We are all Americans now,' was the deeply cherished sentiment of every gray-clad veteran that attended this memorable reunion."

ARTICLES OF ALL KINDS

ACTIVE AT AGE OF 107.

The oldest resident in the State of California lives in Broderick. He is Washington Jackson Brinson, and he resides at 510 G street. Brinson is 107 years old. He is a negro.

If his present state of health is any criterion Brinson will live several more years. He is as agile as a man half his years, and can do a day's work without suffering from the after effects. He attributes his good health to clean living.

The aged man has a vivid recollection of early history of the South, and has a fund of interesting stories about historical incidents.

LOST 121 POUNDS IN FEW WEEKS.

Dr. I. H. Magill of Seneca, weighed 316 pounds when he went on his vacation a few weeks ago. When he returned he weighed 195 pounds.

"The doctors told me I never would be able to get down to two hundred pounds," he said, "but I fooled them. It took persistent exercise. While I was in Texas I started walking a mile a day. That was all I could stand at first. But by the time I had finished my visit in San Diego I was walking eighteen miles a day without becoming in the least exhausted."

GROUNDHOG IS BACK HOME.

Hezzie Sisk of Dalton, Ky., is the owner of a groundhog that is now old enough to retire to private life. About twenty years ago Mr. Sisk's son Sam found a young groundhog pig, took it home and that fall it hibernated. It came out next spring and soon was missing.

Sight had been lost of the animal, but about two months ago the same hog turned up again and went to the same quarters where it was reared, and is still with the family. Mr. Sisk says there is no doubt that it is the very same groundhog that strayed off from home a number of years ago. It is gentle and seems to have made up its mind to die among its former friends.

GET \$2,050,000 WINDFALL.

Two million and fifty thousand dollars, distributed in six Chicago banks, most of it in bills of large denominations, have been added to the fortune of the late John K. Stewart, manufacturer of automobile accessories.

Existence of this money was unknown to the heirs, daughters, five and fifteen years old, respectively, or their guardians until revealed in the Probate Court. The inheritance tax on the additional treasure amounts to \$43,000.

Mr. Stewart's estate was probated in June, 1916,

and tax was paid on \$4,000,000. Mrs. Stewart died soon afterward in North Carolina. She intrusted, in addition to the \$4,000,000, currency totalling \$690,000 to Leander H. Lachance, her nephew. He brought it to Chicago and tax was assessed upon it. He is guardian of the children.

DOG WITH RAILROAD PASS.

There is a dog named Roxie, and on his collar is a brass tablet setting forth that he is an employe of the Long Island Railroad, and instructing all the railway men to let him travel on the trains. This pass was given to the bull terrier by order of the president of the company. One day he saw a guard trying to kick Roxie out of his private car. When the president asked what was the cause of the trouble between the dog and the guard, he was told of the animal's fondness for traveling on the trains, and that he could not be kept out of them. The president's interest being aroused in the dog he was made welcome by him to his private car, and the pass was issued to prevent any more interference with Roxie's traveling.

For fifteen years, according to the American Boy, Roxie has spent all his time in railway traveling, day and night. Curiously enough, he never makes a return journey from a terminus with the same train. After he has spent a little time with one of his favored acquaintances, he will take it into his head to meet a certain train. As soon as it stops at the station Roxie jumps on the train and curls himself up on a vacant seat, or, if there is none to be had, he quietly dozes on the floor until he arrives at his destination. The moment the name of the station is called out he jumps up and makes for the door. After a visit of what he thinks is the proper time, he gets into another train and goes to another station. Sometimes he goes farther along the line, and sometimes he returns in the direction in which he came. Roxie has been at every station along the entire railway many times; but he has never been known to go the entire length of the line in one journey.

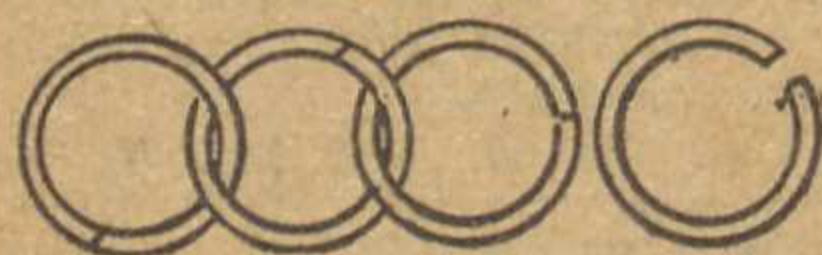
He enters the president's private car with the utmost assurance that he is welcome there, or, indeed, wherever an official of the railway is to be found. He does not care very much for mixing with the passengers. Very few of them have even been able to make friends with him. He seldom barks, and he avoids trouble of every kind. He has a will of his own, and is not slow in showing it. Nothing induces him to leave a train until he arrives at the station he desires. Many persons have tried to win his friendship with eatables, but failed. He can get all he wants to eat and drink at any town on the railway system.

THE KAZOO.

Made in the exact shape of a submarine. With this comical little lustrument you can give a bride and groom one of the finest serenades they ever received. Or, if you wish to use it as a ventriloquist, you will so completely change your voice that your best friend will not recognize it. Price, 12c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

MAGIC LINK PUZZLE.



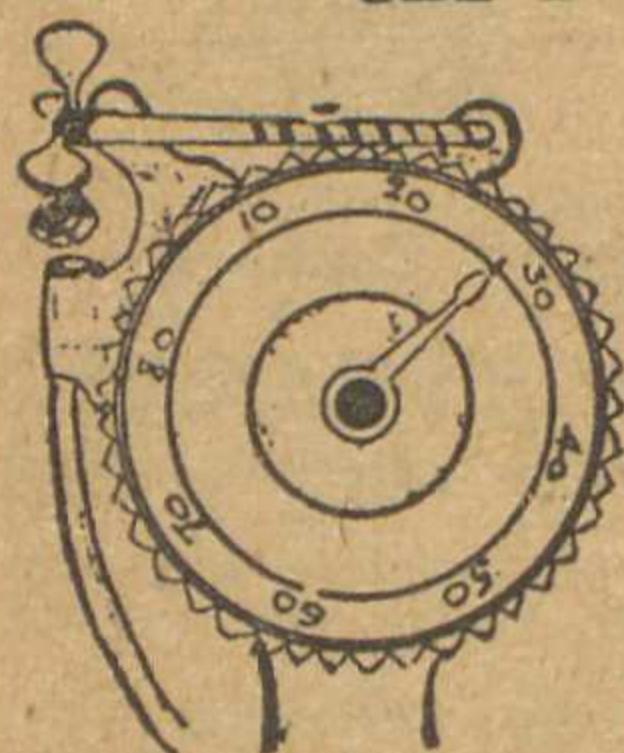
A number of rings. The scheme is to link them together just exactly the same way magicians link their hoops. It looks dead easy. But we defy anybody to do it unless they know the secret. Price 10c, by mail, postpaid.

WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE LUNG TESTER.

We have here one of the greatest little novelties ever produced. with this instrument you can absolutely test the strength of your lungs. It has an indicator which clearly shows you the number of pounds you can blow. Lots of fun testing your lungs. Get one and see what a good blower you are. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

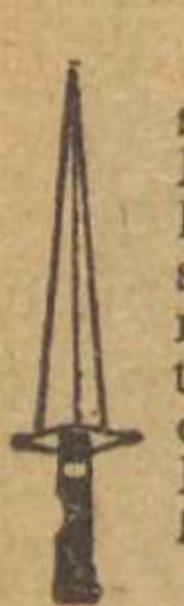
FRANK SMITH, 383 Lenox Ave., N. Y.



THE RUBBER DAGGER.

On account of the war we have substituted this novelty for the Magic Dagger. It is eight inches in length, made to look exactly like a steel weapon and would deceive almost anybody at whom you might thrust it. But as the blade is made of rubber, it can do no injury. Price 15c, by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre Street, Brooklyn, New York.



NUT AND BOLT PUZZLE.

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